

MERRY ENGLAND.

JULY, 1883.

“Horny Handed Brothers.”

A FORGOTTEN CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF LABOUR.

THE old world Monasticism is something removed from us so unendingly far, that the modern mind can only faintly realize the conditions which made it possible. Nevertheless, the old Whig myth that for centuries together the world was wholly wrapped round in ignorance and sloth is now dead. The reader of to-day can see through and beyond the jaunty narrowness of a Macaulay, or the conscientious bigotry of a Hallam. We refuse to believe that human heroism belongs exclusively to any time. We know that in the Middle Ages men's hearts pulsed to the same hopes and the same fears as ours are pulsing to now. There was the same life of the affections, the same call for sacrifice, the same struggle to be on the side of the right, the same striving, and the same failure. We know, too, that in those ages there was a terrible sincerity in men ; that their beliefs were real ; things to be fought for, things to burn others for, or themselves to be burned for. And all through those ages of war there was in the hearts of those fighting men this ideal of the silent life of the cloister—an ideal which some would die for, and many were willing even to live for. And in some dim way, perhaps, Englishmen have come to feel that this ideal may have been a worthy one, but we are still a long way from believing that to those men who

only strove to be faithful to their rule till they died, is due a debt difficult to repay.

There is a repulsion for the English mind in the very word monasticism, for we have decided that its essential spirit was a want of manliness, a sort of shrinking from strife, so that its very righteousness was at best only a white-handed righteousness which came of flying from the temptation, and never from overcoming it. And its vices are seen to be so much worse than those of men in the world—who have a right to be sinners! There seems no selfishness like the self-seeking of the cloister, no sloth like the sanctified sloth of the monk, and no cowardice like the cowardice that came covered with the cowl. Men have grown impatient with those who, careless of their human duties, and forgetful of claims, would leave the wrongs of the world to right themselves, if only they could improve their own speculative chances of a good time hereafter. To the modern English mind selfishness and sloth, however disguised, seem the keynotes of the monk's vocation, and so he has come to be looked upon as in some sort among the deserters of life, as one who would slip out of the yoke, while those who are nearest to him are bending and straining beneath the burden. To adjust all this, and to tell what was the real meaning of those silent lives, whose spending was part of the making of England, would be a task too wide; but we can at least recall something of what they have done, here and elsewhere, in the sphere of labour. It is well that we should at least think kindly of those brave old workers who were the first to shake the stigma of slavery from toil.

However it may have been in the East, the monasticism of the West was mainly moulded by the spirit of the rule of St. Benedict. Before his coming, monasticism, as we understand it, was unknown. There had been collections of hermitages, but no collective obedience to a common rule. It was Benedict who gathered the scattered recluses into the

monasteries, and first gave stability to the system by the institution of life-long vows. It was he who supplanted the type of the East, and caused the monks to take the place in the imaginations of the Western world which had once been held by "the fathers of the desert." Little legislation has been so lasting, and none has coloured so deeply the ideals of men as the legislation of St. Benedict. Wherever, during all those centuries, the 600 years that ran between Benedict and Dominic, there were men who would tread the more perfect way, and act out in their lives the thought that this world is a stepping-stone to another, for them there was the monastery and the Benedictine rule.

And the central idea of it all was this quite simple one. To be a monk meant the wilful cutting off of oneself from the world, with all its sweet natural ties, and wealth of affection, and disquieting cares, and absorbing pursuits, and the thousand things that tempt us to forget we are only travellers upon the earth. What men looked for in the monastery was, after all, only peace, and rest at last—from the thought of happiness. What they sought was not any learned leisure or cultured repose, but a tranquil life only, of sinlessness and detachment from earth—days so filled that there should be no room for temptation. We find this conception of sinlessness, as opposed to meritorious achievement, running all through the legends and the annals that make up the literature of the monasteries. The life of the cloister was to be a life of hardship and endurance, a life of silence and labour, where the sameness of the days should leave the heart nothing to fix on, but where one day was like to another, only that each day which went brought the tired monk nearer to the goal.

And now we may begin to see the exact part played by labour in the monastic economy. The hours were to be so filled and occupied with prayer, and appointed work, and exacting routine, that there was to be no time for sin.

Hence the rule of St. Benedict was the rule of labour—the essential spirit of it was labour; so that if a monk were true to himself, labour was his lot. *Cruce et aratro*—with the cross and the plough they were to conquer. When kindred, and natural affection and fellowship had been left behind, all that remained was to work out their lives in brave silence and in obedience, till the end. Their daily labour, in the fields or within the walls, thus came to be their first need, a sort of manual prayer, and the surest of all the safeguards against temptation. Of the three enemies they were taught to struggle with—the world, the devil, and the flesh—the first might be fled from, and the second defied; but the third passed with them into the monastery, and labour was the weapon with which it was to be met. The place given to chastity as the first of the virtues—and all through the monastic ages it was insisted on, as charity seems to have been by the early Church, and as truth certainly is by the bulk of men in our own day—made the wandering thoughts of the idle hour things to be shunned. Summer and winter, in the seed-time and the harvest, those "horny handed brothers" were about their business, in the field or in the forest. One form of work came to them as readily as another, and it was they who sowed the grain and gathered it, and looked to the winnowing and the thrashing, and then the storing of it in the granges and the granaries of the monastery.

The large eternal features of husbandry have changed very little—were very much the same in those days as they are now; and the idyllic scenes that have come down to us of the tranquil labour of the monks in the field, seem less far off than anything else connected with the life of the monasteries. We can still picture to ourselves, in spite of all change, their work with the spade and the plough, and the axe, and the watchings of the shepherd, and the work in the shearing time, and the milking at night. Some brief simple record, though written so

long ago that the hand that wrote it has been dust for centuries, brings it all back to us. Take one such case : we read how one Julian had been sent to visit the monastery of St. Æquitius, and he tells us : " I found there some old men writing. I asked them where was the abbot ? and they replied, ' In the valley beneath the monastery ; he is cutting grass.' " Folios of description might fail to give the life to the past that is given in those few straight words : " He is in the valley beneath the monastery, cutting grass." Or take this description that William of Jumiège gives of the monks who founded the great monastery of Bec : " You would have seen them, after the office of the church, going into the fields to spend the day in agricultural labours ; the abbot carrying the seeds on his head, and holding tools in his hand ; some clearing the ground, others carrying manure on their shoulders and spreading it on the ground ; no one eating his bread in idleness ; all returning to the church at the hour of divine office, and then sitting down to a meal of oaten bread and herbs with salt and water." We have said that the thought which informed the life of the monasteries was a desire to avoid the occasion of sin, and thus we are not surprised to find that the work of the fields was done in silence, so that there might be no room for unseemly word—or, more commonly still, accompanied by the singing of psalms, so that there might be no place even for evil thought. Says a writer of a later time : " Every thing was rural, and the silence of the country side was broken only by the sound of the psalms. Then you might see the monk guiding the plough and singing Alleluia. The reaper sweating to the harvest repeats the psalms, and the husbandman in the vineyard uses the pruning hook while he sings the canticles of David. These are the songs, and, as the phrase is, the love-ditties of the monks. These are the pipings of the shepherd, these, so to say, are the implements of their husbandry." In this respect the Cistercians, the most popular of the offshoots of the Bene-

dictines, formed an exception, in that the hours of their outdoor work were their hours of meditation. It must have been a strange sight surely, the sight of those cowed men making hay in silence, with no sound but the creaking of the waggon and the movement of the horses, and the rustle of the sweet smelling grass; but hardly more strange perhaps than the sight of those other monks reaping to the sound of the psalms—their voices rising and falling with the swinging of the scythes that sent the ripe grain down. Another little peculiarity of the Cistercian order—and it lets a curious side-light into the quiet life of the monasteries—was that at one period they were forbidden to take their books into the fields, though, as St. Alberic used to take the psalter with him when he worked, the restriction was probably of late introduction.

Gradually, as the monasteries grew larger, and their lands wider, there came a certain conflict between the claims of the choir and the farm. It was difficult to keep up the full services of the choir, particularly at night, when some of the brothers were away sleeping in the granges; and even during the day, when the distances had become greater, the frequent journeys to the church for divine service were impossible. Hence sprung up a sort of natural division of labour, the brothers who had never got the length of learning to read in their breviaries gradually getting a larger share of the agricultural work, until the division stiffened, and every monastery came to have its lay-brothers and choir-monks. We have seen that the primary object of the monkish work would be gained as well by one form of labour as another, and it was in no way confined to agriculture. All the while, when most of the brothers were bearing the heat of the day in the fields, there were others patient in the cloisters, engaged in the ceaseless work of copying; or bending with a loving care over those wonderful illuminations of which, as of the chime of their bells and the colour of their glass, the world has long ago lost the secret. Some

sort of notion of the patience and industry brought to their task of copying may be formed, if we will remember that it is told of one monk, Maurus Lapi, that he copied 1000 volumes in less than fifty years ; and of another, that a waggon with six horses would hardly suffice to draw all that he had written. It was silent, tranquil work, eminently suited to the monastic life ; and so the monk bent over it until at last the tired eyes were worn into dimness, and the cramped fingers refused their task, and then the end was not far.

But though the prevailing atmosphere of the monastery was one of peace, and, by a sort of divine paradox, those who forsook happiness found it, the life of the monk was a difficult one. At the gates of the monastery he had been content to leave what other men call gladness, and to set himself to learn the hard lesson of renunciation. For renunciation is still difficult even when it has been accepted bravely ; and it is a truth of which we need reminding, that “renunciation is not joy, but only the sorrow that is willingly borne.” Amid abundant and constant evidence of the cheerfulness of the monks, we come across signs that their burdens were sometimes almost more than they could bear ; particularly during Lent, when the work was harder and the food scantier, their strength was tried sorely. Nothing could well be more touching than the picture of the almost pathetic helplessness with which St. Bernard regarded his brethren tried almost beyond their strength by the labours and the fastings he himself had imposed. “Not without a great touch of pity, brethren,” he once said, “do I look upon you. I cast about for some alleviation to give you, and bodily alleviation comes before my mind ; but if your penance be lightened by a cruel pity, then is your crown stripped of its gems. What can I do ? Ye are killed all the day long with many fasts, in labours oft, in watchings overmuch, besides your inward trials, the contrition of heart and a multitude of temptations. Yea, ye are killed ; but it is for His sake Who

died for you. For is it not certain that your sufferings are above human strength, beyond nature, and against habit? Another, then, doth bear them for you." The Saint then goes on to say, that if they will only persevere in faithfulness their burdens will be made lighter by divine assistance. On another occasion we find St. Bernard upbraiding a runaway Cistercian, whose courage seems to have failed him, and saying that "watchings, fasts, and manual labour" are light to one who thinks on the great hereafter. We have quoted these instances as showing the little attraction monasticism could have had for any but those imbued with its spirit, and its inmost spirit we have seen was labour. No doubt the history of the monasteries has its seamy side, and there were times of laxity and corruption, when men flocked together, having nothing monkish but the cowl. But here, as elsewhere, it is still true that the fruitful inquiry is not how much chaff was there, but rather how much grain.

And in truth there have been no workers quite like those workers whose work was without wage, and whose ploughs and axes have left lasting traces upon the face of every country throughout Christendom. By the old chroniclers the monks are constantly spoken of as the leaders of husbandry, and we find William of Jumièges using the words monk and agriculturist as though they were synonymous. Guizot says "The Benedictine monks were the agriculturists of Europe; they cleared it on a large scale, associating agriculture with preaching." Hallam tells us we owe the restoration of a great part of Europe to the monks, and how if the monasteries were endowed with tracts of land which seem to us enormous, it was simply because there was no other way of getting them reclaimed. A conspicuous English instance of this is furnished by the Abbey of Croyland, whose monks were the recognized guardians of the fens, making it the special service of their lives to build and guard the dykes raised against the waters. But it is needless

to insist upon a truth so widely known; it is more necessary that we should remember that their labour, which transformed Europe, was the direct outcome of a horror of sin. Vast as was the material gain of the world from the toil of the monasteries, it was, as it were, an accidental gain, and not directly aimed at by the workers themselves. The striving of the monks was not mainly for the piling up of wealth, or for social good, or public usefulness, or national welfare—these things came, but they were not the things cared for. There have been workers in the world who have worked as well as the monks, but they have loved their work chiefly for what it would win for themselves, and not for its own sake. There are plenty of men now who will lead hard lives, and accept privation and strain, and put pleasure aside, and trench upon sleep, and day after day let the small hours of the morning find them still at their work. For some object of desire, of ambition, or of gain, there are many who will refuse ties and the home life, and children's laughter, and everything that could interfere with a single purpose. But with these the gain to self is what is looked for. The monks were very careless about that; the work itself was what they wanted, and wanted because it meant freedom from the supreme evil of the world sinfulness. Work was their need, because it helped them to overcome the enemy that had followed them into the monastery, to subdue persistent temptation, to live up to their difficult ideal. The stress which was laid upon the negative side of goodness, upon sinlessness as opposed to virtue, may seem strange to the thought of to-day, but it lies at the root of much that would else be inexplicable in the old monasticism.

And surely to-day, when the gospel of work is being eagerly listened to, and men are repeating with a new fierceness the words of the Apostle, "He that will not work neither let him eat," we must not pass over what was, perhaps, the greatest service of the monks. They gave to agriculture not only their labour, but their example; and, though the one cleared the

half of Europe, the other was probably of the greater worth to mankind. Long after the coming of the barbarians, manual labour of every sort, tainted with the memories of slavery, was held fit only for serfs, and incompatible with the dignity of a freeman. And among all the influences that slowly broke down the barriers of prejudice and tradition, there was probably none more powerful than the sight of the monks, who all through that rude time were looked up to and revered, going out to their daily labour in the fields. An “abbot with the seed-bags on his head,” and his monks “carrying manure on their shoulders,” presented a spectacle then new to the world—the spectacle of voluntary labour. The military ideal was still in the ascendant; and the increasing hold which the virtues of the industrial type have gained on the esteem of men, is largely due to the toil of the monk. And that this truth of the dignity and nobility of work, which we are all insisting on now, and which makes a Carlyle hail with emphasis the British workman as his “horny handed brother,” was first made possible, and taught, by the example of the inmates of the monasteries, is surely the strangest and most forgotten chapter in all the long story of human labour.

JOHN GEORGE COX.

In a Berkshire Village a Hundred Years Ago.

RECENTLY exploring a lumber-room in quest of a record of ancient Benefaction, I lit upon a box containing several old parish books ; one of which interested me much. It is the record of the parish overseer—an official who existed before the institution of Boards of Guardians—and the study of it may throw some light on the condition of our English villagers about one hundred years ago.

The place referred to is a Berkshire village ; and the book preserves a record of the outlay of the overseer. On an early page we find “ the a Counts of John Ballard ovesere of the Pore, 1769.” A successor proclaims himself “ over scare of the paris.” The position seems not to have been a very desirable one, for on many occasions appears the record of the outlay of five shillings consequent upon “ goin out of” or “ quitin offis.” The ordinary expenses fall mainly under two heads—“ Munthly paiments” and “ Casualties”—the latter ambitious word being spelt in fifteen different ways, ranging from “ Cacetes” to “ Colstis.” The monthly payments went to those who were virtually paupers ; the same names of recipients appear month after month and year after year ; wages were low ; apparently a large proportion of the villagers depended, without shame, upon the rates, which word is sometimes shortened to “ rats” and sometimes lengthened to “ reates.” In some families pauperism was hereditary ; no sooner, for instance, does a man whose name varies from Edgston to Egerton, and who seems to have lived upon the parish from his cradle to his grave, disappear from the roll, than another of the same name and nature appears to take his place. There is also frequent mention of one Shail, who seems to have toiled and spun as little as a lily or as a Peer—

according to Mr. Chamberlain's view of that order. For instance, three shillings are expended on "washing and mending Shail;" his children are supplied with all the "nesseries" of life such as "hainker chiefs, apperns, and other things," the "other things" appearing elsewhere as shirts, shourtes, churts, chifts, shiefs, sheifts, shifts, shifes, showes, shouses and stokens, schoos and stokenes, a pare shous and stakens, a pear of soos on stokens, and a par shush and stogns.

Nor is the other sex neglected. Two sisters, Mol and Kate Painter, were furnished with everything from a "petey koate" to "House Rum." This latter item proves to have been not spirituous liquor but lodging, which figures elsewhere as "logen." The only disrespect shown to Miss K. Painter is in the matter of her name: her Christian name is spelt in twenty-two different ways, including "Cathirn" and "Koattern," and her surname never begins with a capital letter. Besides the usual outlay, she put the parish to extra expense by catching the small-pox—of which frequent mention is made—so that the money most profitably laid out in her behalf must have been that which was expended for "Mofeing painter." So great was the anxiety to be rid of actual or possible paupers that on the wedding of Mary Smallbone the parish spent £1 9s. 6d., this sum including the cost of the "ring," "marrin," and "lisonce."

Small-pox visited the village in 1768, putting the parish to the expense of £2 7s. Within the following years it came frequently; the largest outlay caused by it at one time is £7; "Wido Arlet siner," (senior?) is well paid for "nusen" and "lucking after" and "siting oup" with a patient. In 1806 the Bill for inoculation is £8 7s. 6d.; but in spite of this there is a "terrible visitation" of the disease in the following year. In connection with disease and remedy, it may be noted that "bleeding" is not unfrequently an item; the charge for bleeding a *man* was a shilling; but the fee for "Sukey to be let blood" amounted only to sixpence!

It would seem that cleanliness did not prevail in this Berkshire village a hundred years ago; for ointment is needed to "cure Lee's family of the itch." Another sufferer had the good fortune to get proper treatment at the cost of 14s. 6d. for "exspenses to the ospittel." Most patients were attended to at home. Dame Buss gets five shillings for "cuering Gorg Egerton leegg," and Dr. Tayler is paid 10s. 6d. for one visit to W. Barker's wife, a portion of whose "medsen" is a "botel of drops." Elsewhere "medsen" is spoken of as "fisick." Illness naturally suggests death. The funeral, even of paupers, seems to have occasioned festive expense. Frequent mention is made of the "berin'," "burin" "boring," or "brerin'"; and in addition to the customary outlay, there occur charges for "brad," "chis" or "chese" or "brenchies," not to mention "lickor" and "bear"—this last item on one occasion costing 8s. 4d. In 1786 gin appears in its stead. Once only is any reference made to wine, and that is in connection with a parish wedding, which cost £4 19s. 3d., of which £1 4s. was spent over twelve bottles of wine.

Seeing that the parish is one of those known as Heath parishes, where the villagers had certain common rights, it is not strange that mention is often made of "cuting the pore truff," or "caring the poor's fusen." Apparently the overseer would pay for the cutting and carrying of turf or furze for those who were too ill or idle to do it for themselves. He would also engage men for the duty of fetching (which he prefers to spell as "fethen" or "fechen") "bavins" or "bushbavins"—a name for dry wood still used in the village, though perhaps uncommon elsewhere. Shakespeare indeed speaks of "Rash bavin wits soon kindled and soon burned!" These privileges of "cuting and caring" have in more recent days been exchanged by the villagers for the perhaps more solid but certainly less interesting privilege of receiving annually from the Lord of the Manor £10 collectively.

The overseer was paternal in some ways, and he gives money for the purpose of "airing and keeping Dina Wilmot a weick after smallpocks;" and another woman receives not only £2 for "one month in her lying-in," but also "things for her child," and enough to keep her for "two wicks and four days" since lying-in, besides a "nuss." For "settin a hip," a doctor is paid a guinea, and for the "cure of a boy" double that sum. There is a vagueness about the latter statement of "service" which is not rare in this book. For instance, "a letter from Filkins" cost ninepence; of Filkins, whether a place or person, nothing further is stated. Again, after giving minute details as to the expenditure of divers small sums, one overseer says "Paid the pore at different times," £5 10s. 8d., reminding one of the Devon squire who, during his minority, furnished his guardians with a copy of accounts, of which one line was "box of matches, 1d.," and the next "sundries, £30." But there is legal exactitude as well, and a record legal of legal form. Money is paid for a "warrant, a swearing of Mary Cook" who soon makes an "affidaved." The cost of "going to the Justice for two days" is entered as less than four shillings; but this may have been only the cost of reaching the seat of Justice; for another entry is awful in its brevity—"law business, £8 18s." This is, however, hardly more severe than the charge of a man for "taking and marring" a woman, which cost nearly £5. Another heavy item is £3 18s. 6d., for "expense at London with hannaw Wellman," perhaps a gentler and genteeler way of expressing a fact elsewhere explained as "carring Richard Painter to Bridewell, and Robert Arlot to prison, settera."

From this book we incidentally learn that the cost of "Horshire" for a day, was one shilling; a "waterman" for two days' work—the special nature is not stated—got 5d.; "bord" for four days cost two shillings, and a "bed" which the word "board" naturally suggests, cost 8d. The parish clerk's "salourrey" was £1 3s., and the "cunstibls" bill amounted

to £1 15s. 8½d. for the year. Another annual item, which appears as "goal," "gaul," "goul," "gole," "gail," or "gail" money, is generally about thirty shillings a year, and probably represents the sum due from the village towards the support of the county prison. To the good order and defence of the country also the village contributed by providing men for the militia, which the overseer spells as "milita" or "millicher." The spelling of the months and seasons seems to have caused trouble. "Febeary, Sember, Michelmas and La day day," appear. At the latter time £4 4s. is paid for the maintenance of a certain Grace Godard's child for fifty-six weeks. This child seems especially favoured, as he grows up he is provided by a paternal parish with a pair of "hedgen gloves" to protect his hands from thorns, and with a "fowl wether cot" to protect his body from rain and wind; he is also furnished with a "jaket an other cloes." A less pleasing ornament to the hand is spoken of later as a "pear of hand cofs," whereof the price was two shillings; one may hope that these were not got for Master Godard, but that he was the fortunate recipient of a "smock" that cost 5s. As for "bear," it was not confined to funerals. The cost of what was drunk at three "Vestourreys" was 10s. 8d. At one of these gatherings money was paid for a certificate spelt once as "setivet," and once as "sertifect." This seems to have some connection with a "traviling gairl," who died on her way through the village; gipsies then, as now, being frequently seen in the neighbourhood.

The parish money was widely, if not wisely, spent. The accounts are ill kept, so it is not easy to be accurate; but the rates (we read sometimes of "making a rat," and sometimes of "singing a reate"), were very heavy, and the people, it would seem, not very happy. The village now contains about 300 people; in the last thirty years the population has decreased by 120; but probably a century ago it was not twice as large as at the present time. The expenses, however, were as

follows:—In 1781 the overseer spent on the poor a sum just under £200, which was collected by a rate of seven shillings in the pound ; in 1788 it sunk to 4*s.* 6*d.*, and in 1801 rose to 14*s.* ; in 1802 it sank to 10*s.* ; in 1807 to 2*s.* ; after that it rose gradually till it reached 9*s.* ; in 1815 it sank to 6*s.*, and in 1835, which is the latest year of which the overseer's book takes cognizance, it fell further to 4*s.* These facts and figures may well be considered by those who grumble at the poor-rates of to-day, and who think that our social progress is too slow ; and they will probably agree that, though much remains to be done by way of bettering the position and condition of our villages, still they and we have no reason to cast longing and regretful eyes to the poor-law administration of a hundred years ago.

J. F. CORNISH.



STUDIES OF ACTION.

"AND THE SEA GAVE UP THE DEAD WHICH WERE IN IT."
 (BY SIR FREDERICK LEIGHTON, President of the Royal Academy.)

The Story of a Picture.

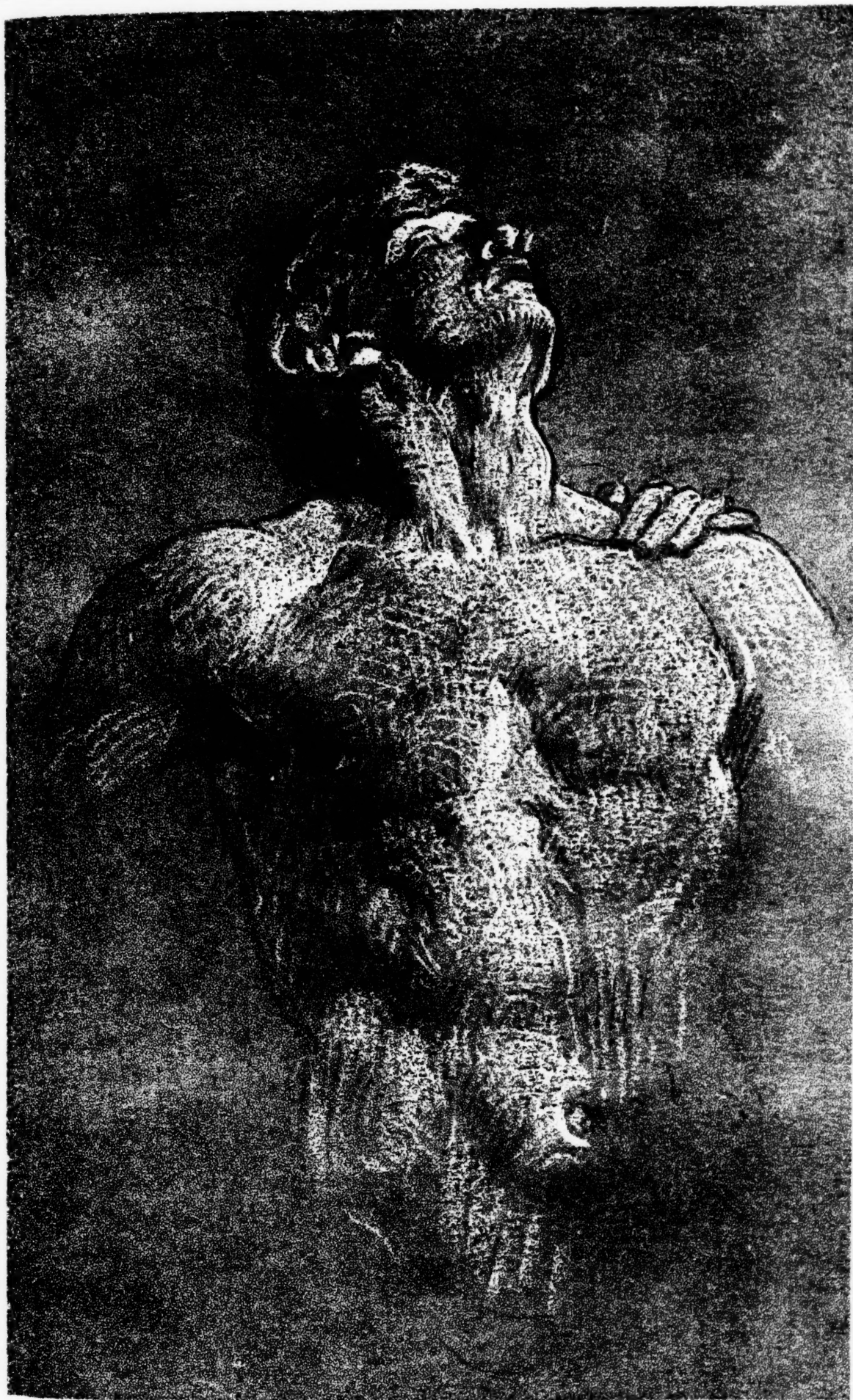
EVERY one enjoys looking over an artist's sketch book. There is, besides the pleasure of seeing the "way of it," the chance that something may be found in the initial study which was lost, in spite of all efforts to retain it, in the ultimate work. "Put in the head of my hero," wrote poor Haydon in his diary; "not half so well as in the sketch. There is always something in a sketch that you can never get when your feelings are quiescent." Haydon no doubt sketched with a fervour which was determined to be intense, at all costs, and let us hope that he overstates the case. But any one who wanders through a sketch book will find some motive, some vigour, or some expression of action, which has slipped away before the picture was done; or else he has merely the specially human pleasure of following a fellow-creature through the processes of labour and art, through efforts, phases, *pentimenti*, and returns, through the "long patience, which is genius," and the quiet devotions of study. In opening to us a few of the leaves of his own drawing book, one of the most emphatically serious Painters of his time has given us this pleasure in its perfection.

For this is an age which takes an intelligent interest in processes. Perhaps there is no department of an industrial exhibition more attractive than that which shows the "way of it," in manufactures: no book more eagerly read than that which gives the "mental analysis" of a change of belief; and surely Art may claim to be considered not less interesting than Industry—if only for the industry that is necessary to Art. Moreover, if interest be aroused in the processes of a picture our public will speedily cease to be, what at present it is, decidedly less critical—that is, less appreciative, less humble, and less delighted—among pictures than most of our Continental

neighbours of corresponding education. The difference is due, in part of course, to the habit of *looking* which is rife in Latin races, contrasted with our natural habit of preoccupation. The Latin nations are able without an effort, while we are obliged to learn, to see pictorially. The public in a London gallery would be all the better for the knack of seeing Nature pictorially, in the first place ; and in the second, of looking pictorially at a picture. And in the acquirement of the latter knack, the study of the ways of production is the best help.

For Englishmen are fond of a story *in* a picture, and that literary fondness may be best corrected by learning something of the story *of* a picture. The "human interest" of a little trivial narrative, or of a cheap allegory introduced by means of figures into a landscape, may be best displaced by the more legitimate human interest of following the artist's methods, his carefulness, the foundation and the construction of his work. Besides, the sight of that carefulness is a good lesson to those who are inclined to think that a successful artist is a lucky fellow, whose achievement has something of the nature of a fluke. When a Lord Holland hesitated at the price of a rather slightly painted portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds, and asked how long the work had taken to do—"All my life, my Lord," answered the first President ; and that is exactly the time which a true work of art has cost a true artist.

But apart from this life-long approach, the minor preparations for the picture itself should be better understood, and are far more easily intelligible and explicable. Some explanation, it is clear, is necessary. During two winters, a few years ago, the Academy and the Grosvenor Gallery exhibited sketches and studies by the Old Masters, which said much both to artists and public, but said it explicitly to artists only—vaguely to the public. Without some commentary such displays of the notes and stages of study are hardly intelligible. The outsider loses half the interest and half the profit by not



STUDY FROM THE NUDE.

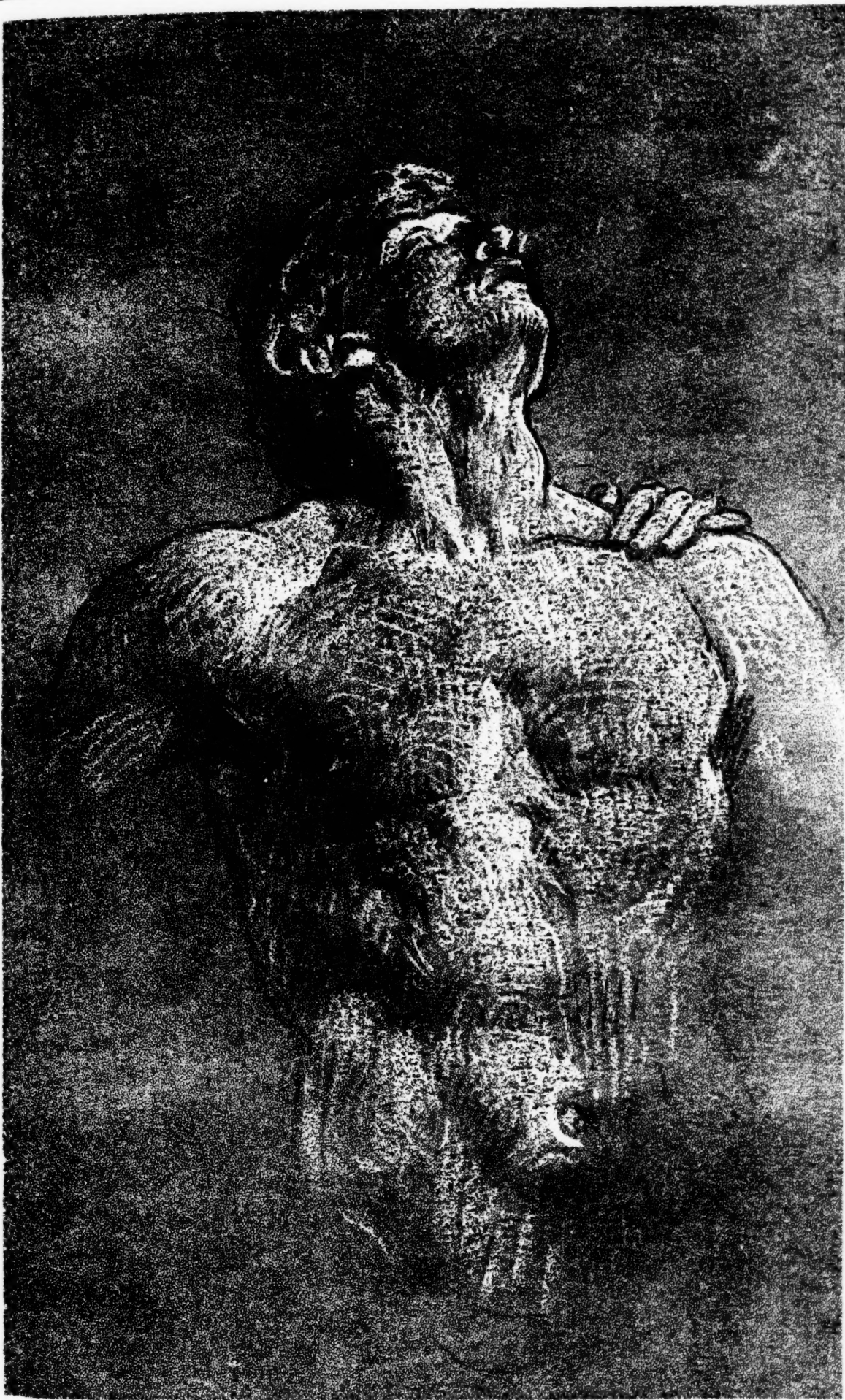
“AND THE SEA GAVE UP THE DEAD WHICH WERE IN IT.”

(By Sir Frederick Leighton, President of the Royal Academy.)

neighbours of corresponding education. The difference is due, in part of course, to the habit of *looking* which is rife in Latin races, contrasted with our natural habit of preoccupation. The Latin nations are able without an effort, while we are obliged to learn, to see pictorially. The public in a London gallery would be all the better for the knack of seeing Nature pictorially, in the first place; and in the second, of looking pictorially at a picture. And in the acquirement of the latter knack, the study of the ways of production is the best help.

For Englishmen are fond of a story *in* a picture, and that literary fondness may be best corrected by learning something of the story *of* a picture. The "human interest" of a little trivial narrative, or of a cheap allegory introduced by means of figures into a landscape, may be best displaced by the more legitimate human interest of following the artist's methods, his carefulness, the foundation and the construction of his work. Besides, the sight of that carefulness is a good lesson to those who are inclined to think that a successful artist is a lucky fellow, whose achievement has something of the nature of a fluke. When a Lord Holland hesitated at the price of a rather slightly painted portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds, and asked how long the work had taken to do—"All my life, my Lord," answered the first President; and that is exactly the time which a true work of art has cost a true artist.

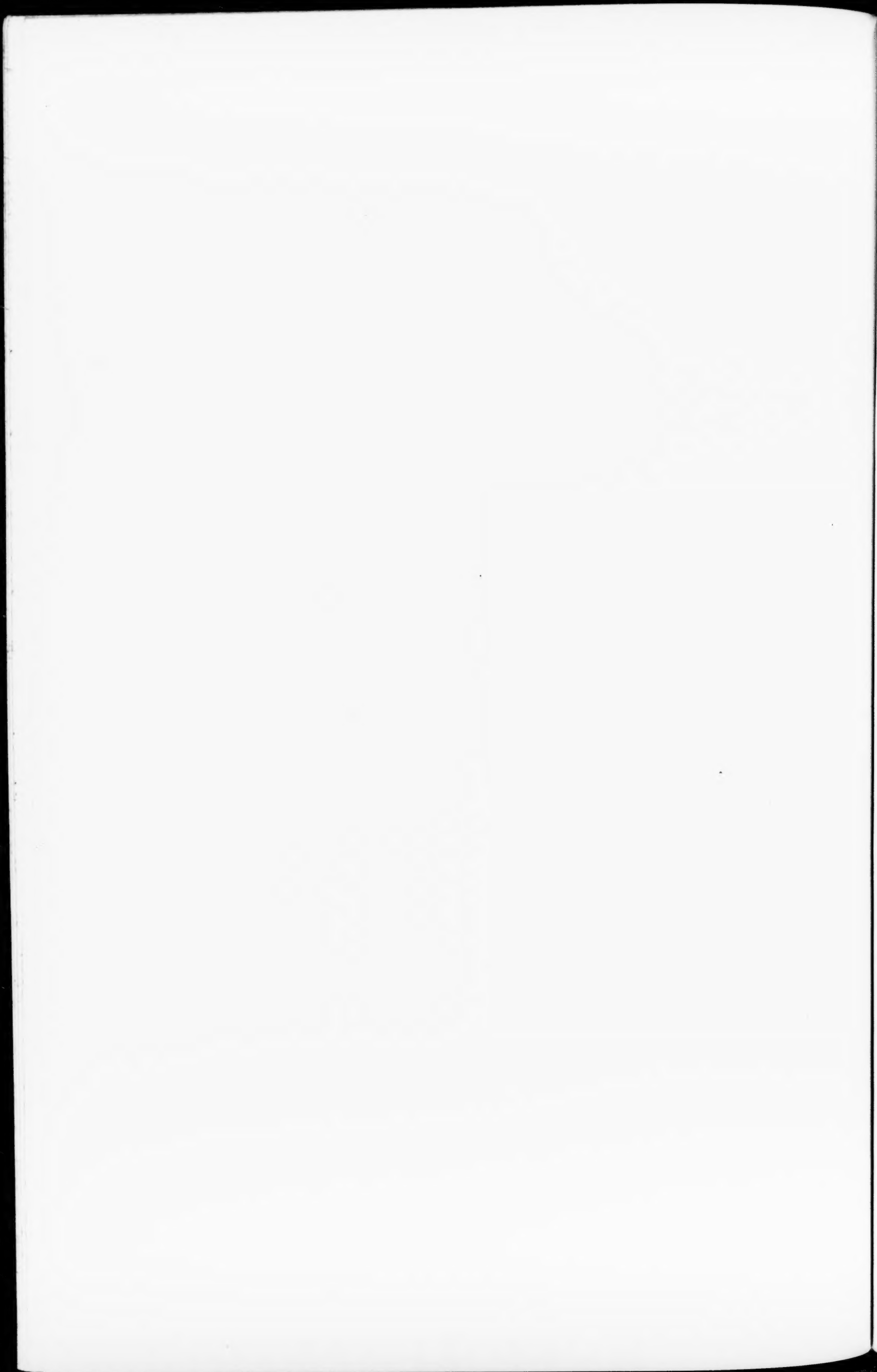
But apart from this life-long approach, the minor preparations for the picture itself should be better understood, and are far more easily intelligible and explicable. Some explanation, it is clear, is necessary. During two winters, a few years ago, the Academy and the Grosvenor Gallery exhibited sketches and studies by the Old Masters, which said much both to artists and public, but said it explicitly to artists only—vaguely to the public. Without some commentary such displays of the notes and stages of study are hardly intelligible. The outsider loses half the interest and half the profit by not



STUDY FROM THE NUDE.

“AND THE SEA GAVE UP THE DEAD WHICH WERE IN IT.”

(By Sir Frederick Leighton, President of the Royal Academy.)

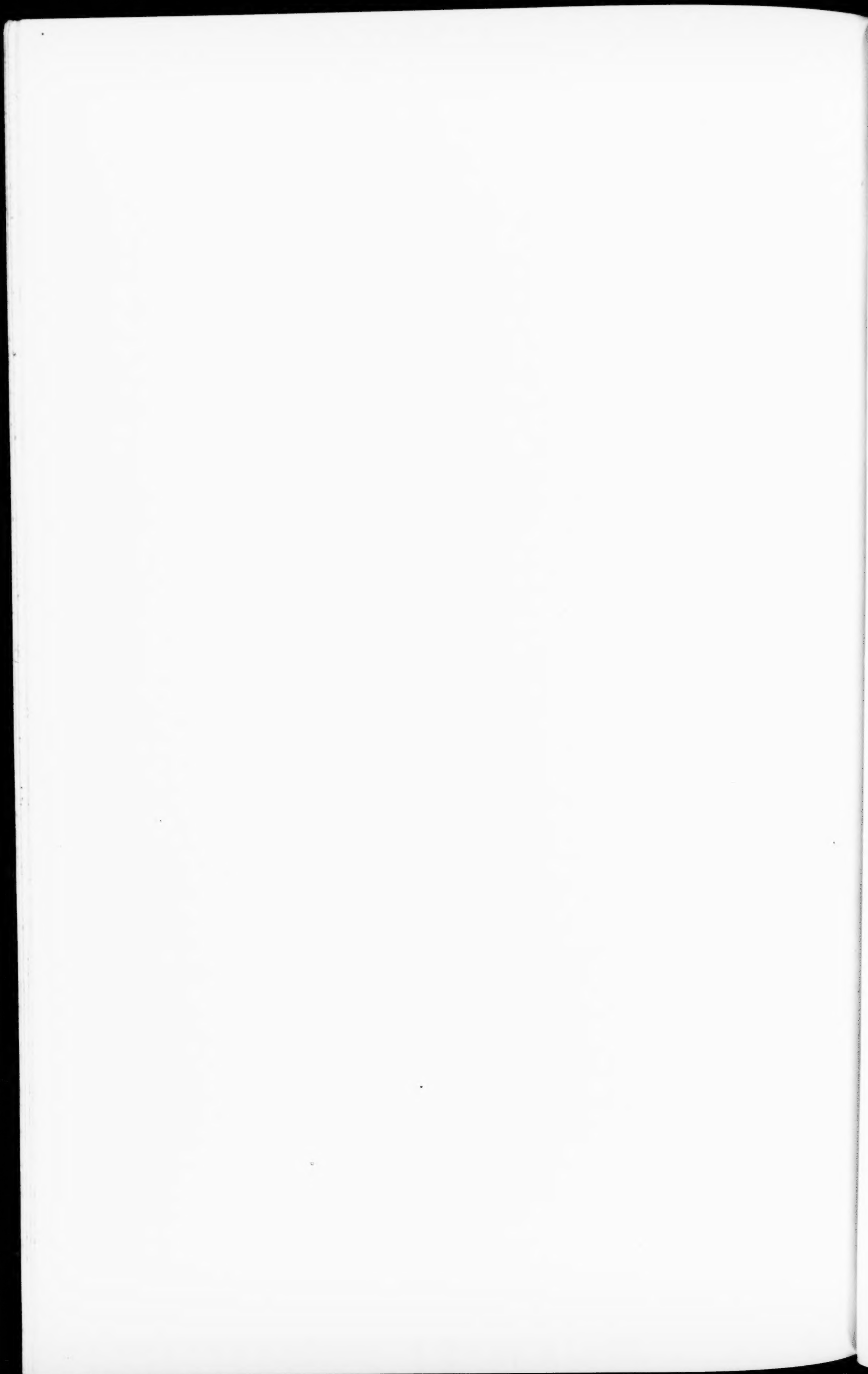




AUXILIARY STUDY.

“AND THE SEA GAVE UP THE DEAD WHICH WERE IN IT.”

(By Sir Frederick Leighton, President of the Royal Academy.)



knowing precisely why this anatomical passage was repeated so often, or why those two figures were grouped again and again with such slight variations of action. In trying to follow out a few of such processes of study, I am writing as an outsider for outsiders; but perhaps the smallness of my own knowledge may help to make me plain to those whose knowledge is no greater.

Probably most artists will tell us that the first stage—that of composition—involves the closest mental labour. Of this there is generally little record kept that can amuse or interest the world; most of the notes made of a general composition are *pattes de mouche*—written rather than drawn, in a way significant to the author only. But in the study of the several groups and figures, the purpose of work becomes definite to the eyes of others. For now the artist approaches the subject of his study—Nature. Sir Frederick Leighton tells us that he does all with the life before him. First comes the rapid and impulsive sketch from the model. Such a study is of extreme importance, inasmuch as it must remain to correct the after-work, to remind the artist of what “fire and air” constituted the figure of his thought, interpreted by an intelligent studio model, or presented by an unconscious model in the fields or roads. Such sketching is costly labour; the artist’s time is overfilled during the minutes that he is at work upon it; all his faculties are at strenuous activity—whether he is catching a sky in its flight, or a peasant at labour, or a child at play, or merely a model in the impetus of action. Happily, it would seem that such human labour has its own indepreciable worth. So much of a man’s effort has its price. His deliberate work has a value of a different kind—the value of a man’s time, let us say; while the impulsive kind has the value of his life. Truly, work done from the life is work done by the life. It is probable, too, that mind and eye are spurred to keener and broader perception when the sky is on the wing,

the peasant man or woman drawing to a close of the picturesque labour which the artist has set himself to study, the model on the point of losing the tension and vigour of the first attitude. Thus, the value of such work is great every way.

The subject of amateur models is a curious one. The more primitive the peasant the more suspicious he is of the mysterious process of sketching. Before the conscription was made general in Italy, the labourer always had a lurking fear that the drawing might be used against him for military purposes—and the fact was a pathetic evidence of the one dread of a peasant's heart, now made an almost universal reality. Among the women there is always an apprehension lest they should be represented talking to a young man, to the offence of their sense of decorum. I remember, for instance, the anxiety and distress of a married peasant woman somewhere in the Genovesato lest her husband (in South America) should come across an English sketch in which she was depicted, for the purposes of art, as chatting across a well with a youth of the neighbourhood. But apart from these quaint difficulties, there are the common obstacles raised by the awkwardness of an otherwise nobly graceful peasant when he first is made aware of his own pose and of his hands and feet. Graceful or uncouth, besides, the amateur model suffers acutely from even half an hour's restraint. In dealing with Sir Frederick Leighton's studies, we have of course another kind of sketching to consider—that of a truly classical master working at the initial sketches of his picture against no accidental difficulties, but against all those essential difficulties which no art escapes.

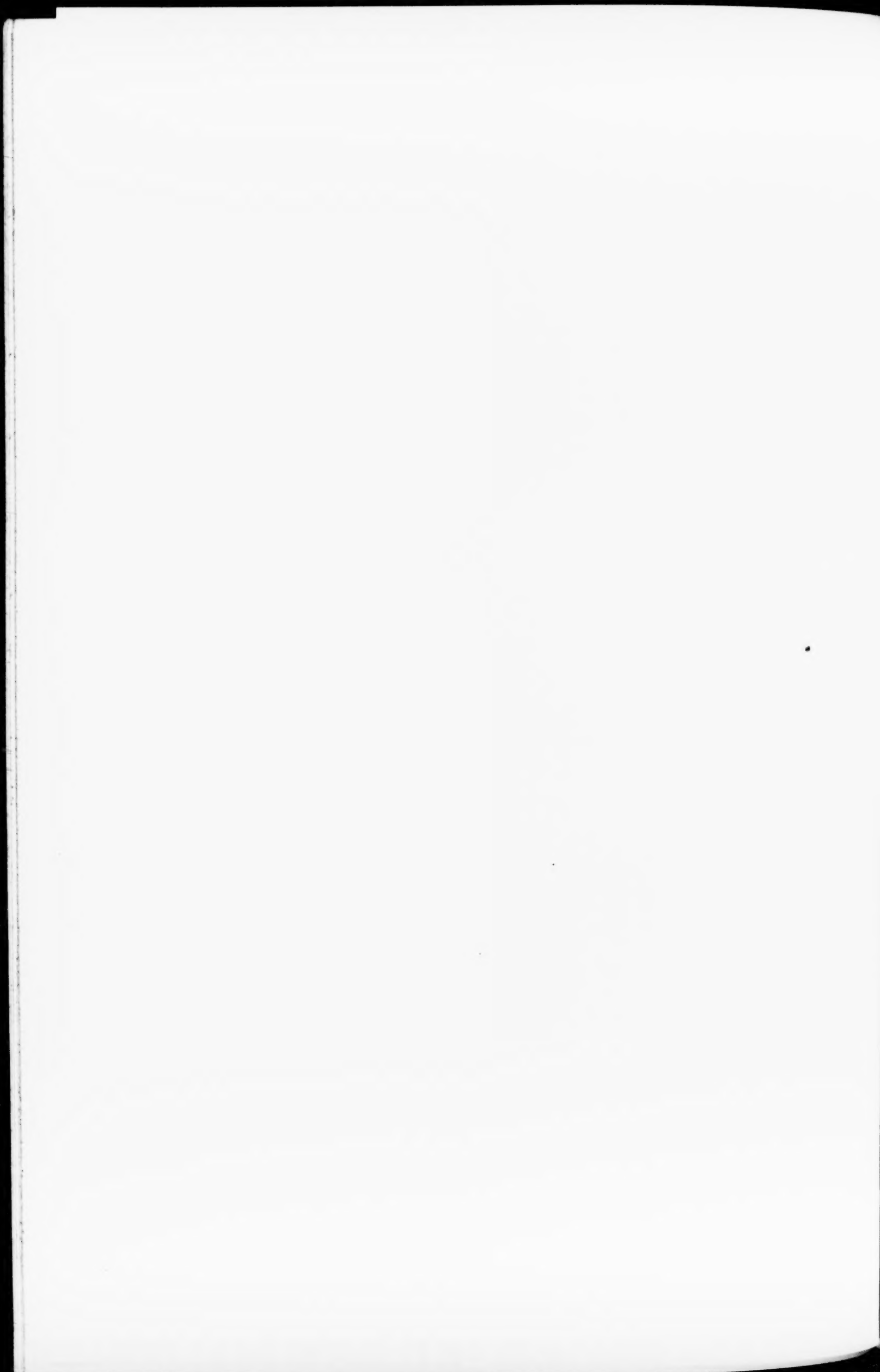
For the illustration of the story of a picture the President's noble work for the dome of St. Paul's has been chosen, inasmuch as it may help in the general knowledge of this artist as a designer of heroic subjects, rather than as the painter of luxurious beauty. Things which are smaller in feeling



STUDY OF DRAPERY.

“AND THE SEA GAVE UP THE DEAD WHICH WERE IN IT.”

(By Sir Frederick Leighton, President of the Royal Academy.)

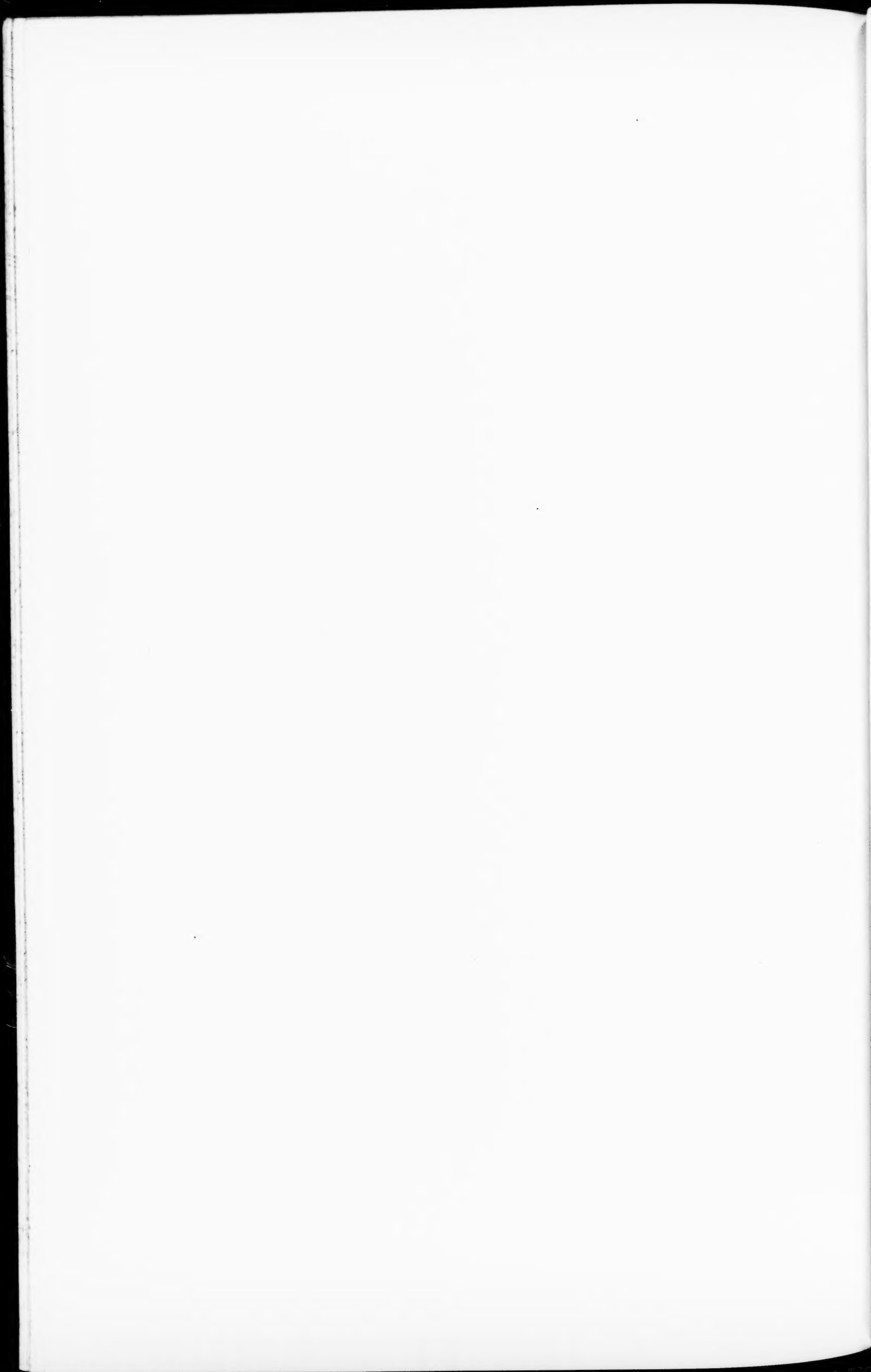




FINISHED STUDY.

"AND THE SEA GAVE UP THE DEAD WHICH WERE IN IT."

(By Sir Frederick Leighton, President of the Royal Academy.)



are generally more popular than those which are greater ; and the author of the "Clytemnestra," of the "King David," and of the "St. Jerome," is chiefly admired for his "Music Lesson," his "Memories," and his "Vestal." Nevertheless, a longer judgment will recognize in Sir Frederick Leighton a power of thought and execution which his "idyllic" pictures—however thoughtful in their workmanship—could not satisfy. Our reproduction of the entire design, "And the Sea gave up the Dead that were in it," will enable the reader to follow the development of the various figures in the sketches. Some of these figures have been abandoned. The left hand study of number 1, for instance, is a first idea for the angel who begins to soar upwards with the dead. The right hand drawing is a study, which has been retained, for the figure to the extreme right, rising with the arms raised above the head in the action of getting free from the grave-clothes. The next page contains unused studies. One has the hands slightly lifted in a noble action, waking with adoration ; one throws off the cerements with bent head and outstretched arms in a strongly realistic movement—the realism is vigorous, but without the modern twang of familiarity. In the third figure both arms are flung aloft lifting the shroud as a veil. All are on their knees. So far we have those initial studies from life of the necessity of which I have already spoken. These, when it has been decided to retain the pose and action, are kept as the most valuable reminders and guides, so that when the impulse of movement or expression is lost in the subsequent elaboration of parts, they may present to the painter his own intention as it was in the moment of freshness. For if such studies are the initial word of action they are also its final word. The reader will not fail to remark that these all-important sketches are made with the drapery ; for being essentially impressionary, they must be complete in impression rather than in construction.

The second stage, then, is the study from the nude, in the same

attitude. To illustrate this we have the drawing of the Resurrection angel to the waist—a most careful and detailed study, finished from life, in which are noticeable, however, some variations from the attitude finally adopted. The next illustration (number 4) is of especial interest, not merely as a note of the general artist's processes, but as a sign of this special artist's searching and penetrating care. After making an elaborate life-study from the shoulder and arm of the young female figure which droops, to the spectator's left, in the strong arm of the angel, Sir Frederick Leighton made an auxiliary study of the masculine shoulder, with its more accentuated anatomy—of course, with no intention of using it in the finished work, but merely that the girlish forms might be more intelligently rendered, with a surer and therefore a gentler hand—a hand that grasped, as it were, the muscular origins and insertions which it did not explicitly express. Such unsparing research of truth cannot fail to make itself evident by a certain vital quality in work that implies so much.

Next to the long and careful studies from the nude, come the drawings of drapery. These, when simple or only moderately elaborate, are made, like the foregoing studies, from the living model. It is only when the drapery is excessively elaborate that the help of the lay figure is called in. See how small a part that formidable *mannequin* plays in a master's picture—a part which does not lose the artist a touch of truth or a breath of inspiration. Of these studies of drapery we give that done for the middle figure of the distant group to the spectator's right, the dead man rising in his bonds and chin-cloth.

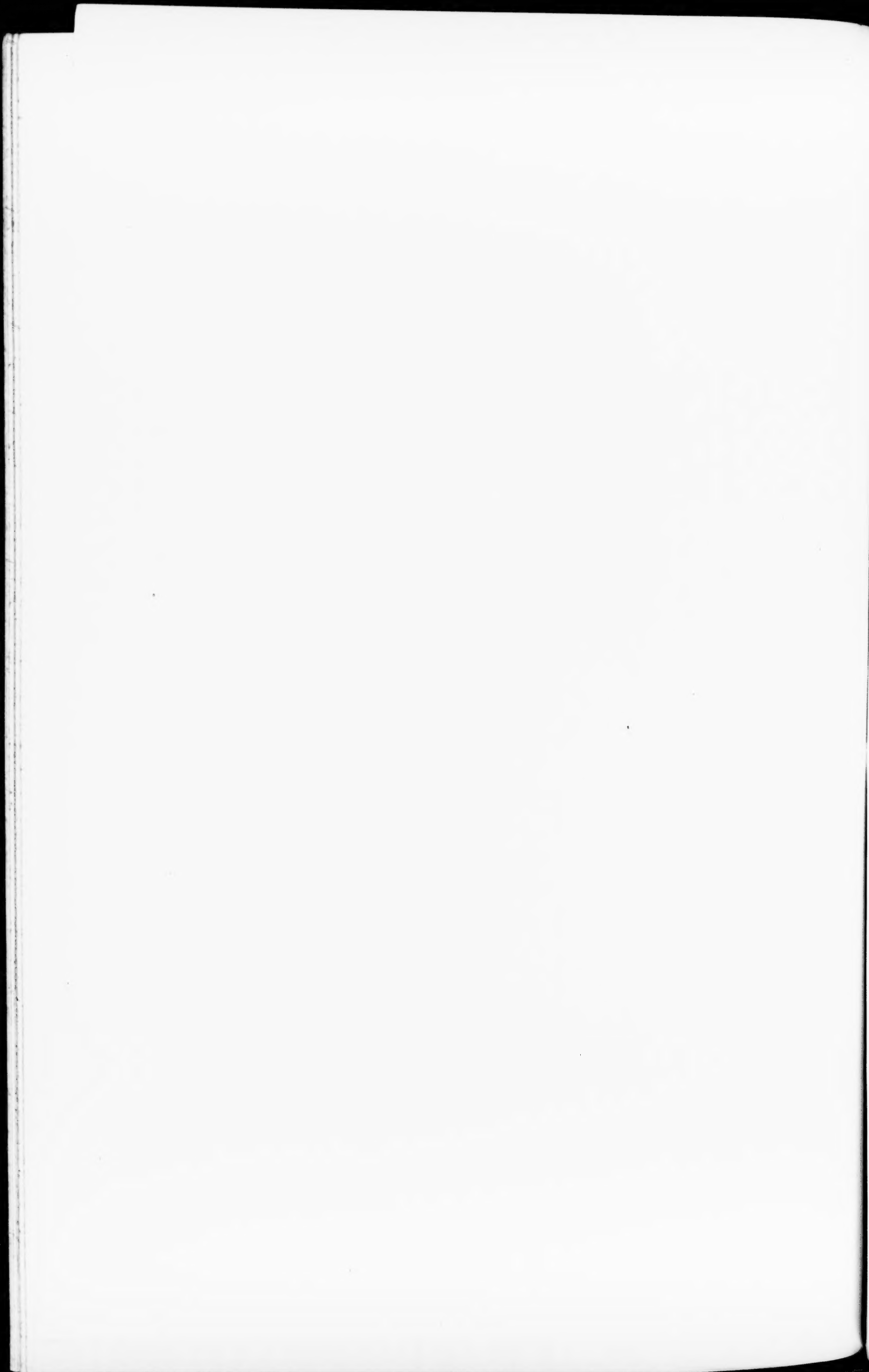
Yet another stage of drawing remains—that of the finished study, in which the anatomy and the drapery are combined, the initial impulse of the first sketch being also united to the knowledge gained in the course of the long investigation into the truth of form and construction which has followed that first



FINISHED STUDY.

"AND THE SEA GAVE UP THE DEAD WHICH WERE IN IT."

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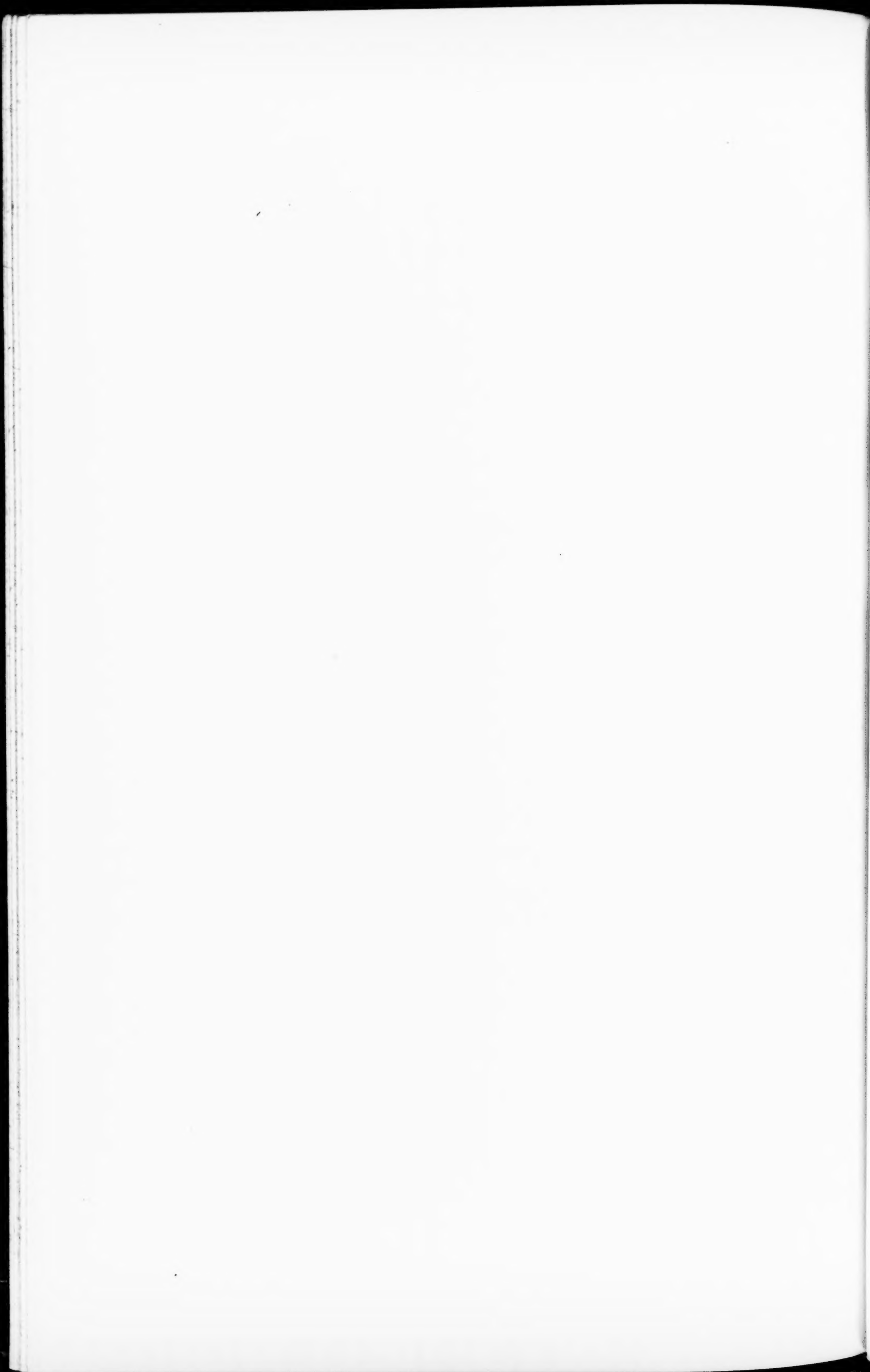




STUDY OF GROUPING.

“AND THE SEA GAVE UP THE DEAD WHICH WERE IN IT.”

(By Sir Frederick Leighton, President of the Royal Academy.)



sketch. To this class belong numbers 6 and 7 in our pages—that of the figure rising in its burial-clothes in the foreground, and that of the figure—half hidden in the finished work—which struggles with energetic action amid its bonds, at the left of the distant group to the right. The two fine studies of hands belong rather to the stage of drawings from the nude.

Then, to illustrate the combination of actions in a group, we have a beautifully elaborate and careful study (number 8) for part of the central figure, with the boy clinging on the right. This drawing is most notable in its research into parts, as shown by the beauty and fineness of the joints and articulations. As a further help in the grouping and otherwise, there is also the process of modelling in clay, whereby the artist tests still further the composition of his forms, the flowing together of lines, and that close and delicate adjustment of attitudes, which is like the fine adjustment and collocation of words in an exquisite sentence.

It is after these processes—and of course the drawings we have reproduced are but specimens of many—that the President of the Academy, who can compose not only a picture but a phrase, exclaims “Every picture is a subject thrown away!” Deep in a master’s mind must be the admiration of the things to be presented to the world by his art, if he is able so to ignore the effort, the happiness, the interpretative thought of his long artistic processes as to declare that the beauty which was before his eyes at the beginning has been wasted by his art. But the critic need not share in this lofty dissatisfaction. After all, the master’s “subjects thrown away” become the treasures of the world.

Sir Frederick Leighton has good precedents for his silent labour, his secret service, of which the public here gets a glimpse. Michael Angelo very evidently “took pains!” The story of his studying the eyes and fins of fishes in the market, when he wished to make fish-like demons assailing

St. Anthony, in an early design, may or may not be true ; but any way, it was told in illustration of a truth. And is it not recorded of him that, in answer to a reproach that he was wasting his time on the detail of a statue, he said, "Trifles like these make up perfection, and perfection is no trifle?" But there are no trifles in Nature ; and none have known this better than did that Michael Angelo, that Raphael, that Leonardo, that Holbein, who never tired of drawing the forms of the figure, foot, and hand, the fine articulations and clear and finished joints and broad muscles. The galleries of Europe are rich with the workshop sketches of Raphael alone. It is easy to fill an exhibition in any country of Christendom with his studies and those of his compeers. England has a treasury of them, so have France and Germany ; and the schools of Italy may educate their pupils by the processes of the Old-Master drawings which they possess.

Few painters of our time would not be somewhat shamed by a comparison of that labour with their own ; and assuredly it is only those who have emulated the industry of the great Italians who may hope to imitate them in perdurable influence. And when the students of the future gather round these sketches of the masters among us now, just as students of to-day explore those secrets of the masters of an older renown, they will learn something more than the mechanisms by which this or that effect was produced—the lesson that Genius itself has no immunity from the waste of often ineffectual labours, and from the weariness of thrice-attempted toil.

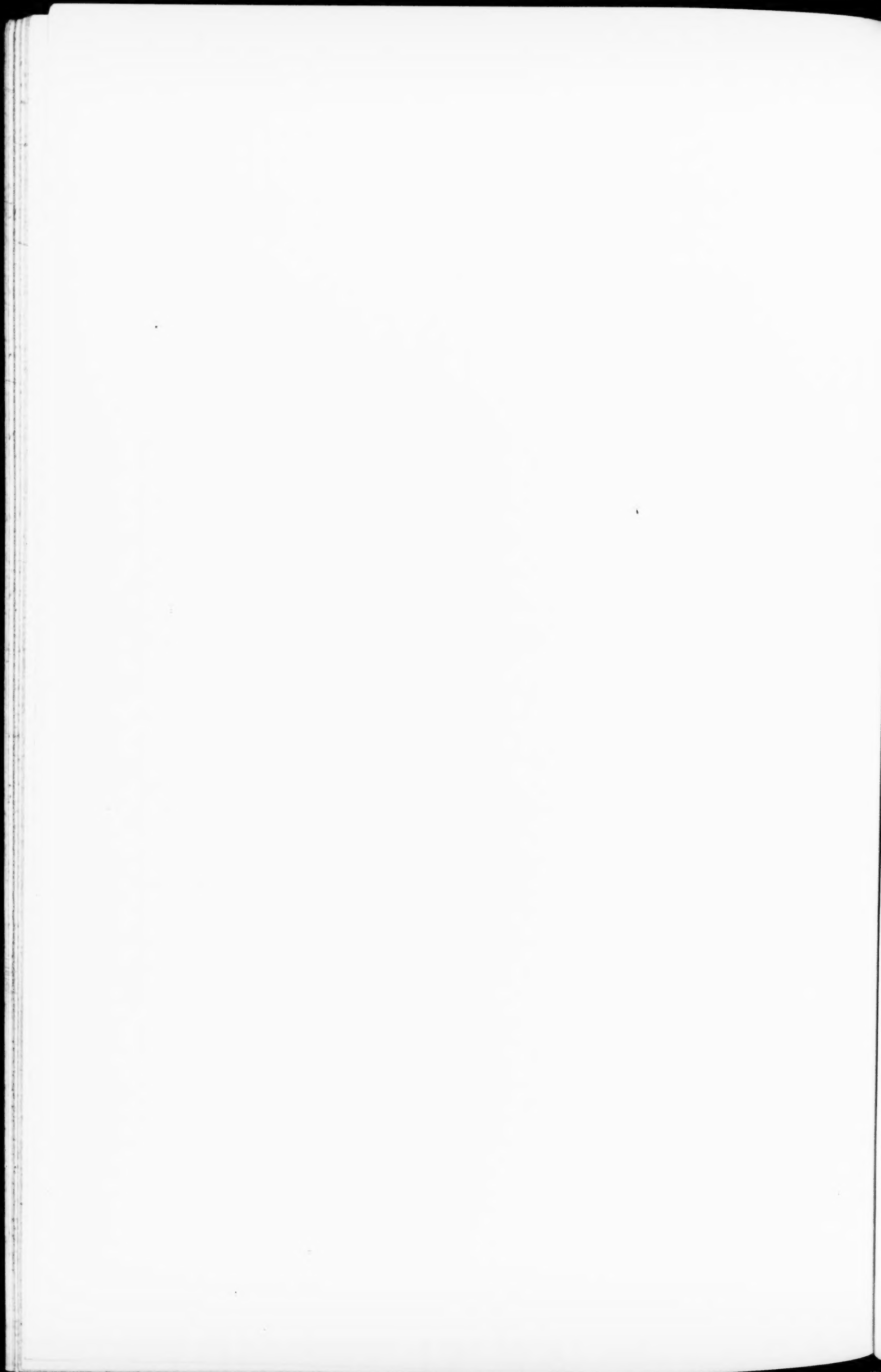
ALICE MEYNELL.



THE CARTOON.

“AND THE SEA GAVE UP THE DEAD WHICH WERE IN IT.”

(By Sir Frederick Leighton, President of the Royal Academy.)



Her Brother !

IT is a romantic little tale, but as true as daylight, and opens in a Spanish courtyard, full of strong yellow sunshine, with a deep border of shadow under the open gallery that runs along the walls of the house, with flowers glowing by the pavement, doves winking on the eaves, and a fountain playing lazily into a basin, beside which kneels a little young girl, dabbling with her fingers in the water. She is half a Spaniard and half an Englishwoman ; her hair is black in the shadow and gold in the sun ; her eyes, which when grave look dark as night, are in reality a rich blue. She is as brilliantly beautiful as the cactus flower growing near her ; a flash of the sun in her smile, a tinge of the pomegranate in her cheek, and her face always changing with a hundred laughing, pouting, bewildering beauties of expression.

An old lady comes into the courtyard, lean, withered, and brown, wrapped in a black lace veil, and clasping a rosary and prayer-book. She has just returned from church, and winks like the doves in the strong sunlight behind her fan. The girl springs up and goes to meet her, and folding her little hands, says—

“Mercedes, you have been praying a long time. I am going to pray now, to you. You must take me to England.”

“That is not praying ; it is command,” said Mercedes.

“Then I will command. I am going to England to my brother.”

“Ah, my baby ! What has put this brother in your head ?”

“You ; you told me about him long ago.”

“You forget what I did tell you ; sit down and I will repeat it again.”

And they sat and made a picture on the edge of the fountain.

"Your brother was hard and unkind. He quarrelled with your father for marrying your mother—boy as he was at the time—and ran away to England ; never would write, never was heard of again. Is this a person to be sought for or desired ? He would not speak to you if he met you, little one !"

"It was because he was only a boy that he was so foolish. He is wiser now ; we have heard that he is a great merchant, and I am sure he would speak to me if he were to meet me."

"England is a cold and barren place," pursued Mercedes ; "the people are unkind, and the climate is harsh. You and I would perish there in a month."

"I want my brother !" wailed the girl.

Mercedes groaned in spirit. She had taken this child to herself on the death of its parents, to satisfy the cravings of a warm heart to which the happiness of motherhood had been denied. Now she was suffering the pang that mothers feel when their fledglings grow strong of wing and want to fly away. Till now the girl—Mary was her English name, but the Spaniards called her *Immaculata*, a long name for so small a person—till now she had been happy with her protectress, but of late she had taken this craving for her brother, her strong, large, man-brother, who, if living, must be twice her age. Mercedes' face was growing green with care at the thought of the sacrifice she knew she would soon have to make ; and in fact it was not long after the above conversation that she finally gave way, saying—

"I will go even to this grey, cold England with you, my nursling ; if so be I can thus give you the desire of your heart !"

The next scene is a dingy lodging-house in Bloomsbury, London. The inexperienced pair of foreigners are not rich, and

cannot have such a dwelling as would prove to them that England, as well as Spain, can be pleasant to live in. Mercedes growls when they are stared at in the street with their black veils and fans, and is not so practical as to think of buying bonnets. She is wrathful over the open remarks and long looks provoked by her "baby's" picturesque beauty. Oh, for the quiet courtyard at home, with the cactus blooming and the fountain playing. How dreadful are these crowding business-like faces ; these gaunt ugly houses ; these muddy, unlovely, undecorated streets !

But Immaculata is full of other thoughts than these ; she is looking for her brother as she goes along the thoroughfares, certain that instinct will enable them to recognize one another. She has calculated how old he is by this time, how Englishmen look at his age ; she knows his features, for she has her father's picture, and her brother was like him. Also she believes that she herself resembles her English father more than her Spanish mother, and so he will instantly know her when he looks on her. The days go on and Mercedes grows more timid, more angry, more hopeless of satisfying the little one's foolish longings. They have come to England, and nobody in England knows them, or cares for them. They have no clue to the brother's dwelling-place, no one they speak to has ever seen or heard of him. Immaculata weeps at night, when the wheels are rattling loudly over London pavements, and she sobs to herself that Mercedes is getting cross and desperate, that she stays more and more indoors, and will not come out into the public streets, where there is a chance that the beloved brother may meet them on his daily path. Already she, Mercedes, threatens to make arrangements for returning to Spain, and it is certain she will not remain in England a great deal longer. And so the days go on again, and the spring evenings lengthen, making all things look only drearier ; for no blossom has as yet appeared as a herald of the return of

bloom to the earth ; not even the daffodil has unfurled its yellow flag of hope in the brown and barren thickets far away from London town. Two or three months hence the streets will teem with flowers from the woods and fields, but of that Mercedes knows nothing, and would not believe if she were told. Fog, frost, gloom, loneliness, she declares passionately, are all that England can offer to the wanderer who is foolish enough to come to it from happier lands.

A wild desperate little face is that of Mary Immaculata, as, driven into a corner at last, she pours forth her tale in the ear of her good-natured landlady. That buxom, motherly person listens with sympathy to the recital, and gives counsel on the case in point, according to her lights.

"In the city, my dear, gentlemen do congregate by the hundred and by the thousand. The air is black with them, coming on to meal times, as I am told by my nephew, who is a clerk in them vicinities. If your brother is a merchant, my word on it, he have an office in the City ! Bishopsgate, or Aldersgate, or some of them other gates will take you to him like magic by underground railway train."

The immediate consequence of this information is that a small figure, draped in black, steps quietly and alone out of the Bloomsbury lodging one morning early, runs along the streets where the milkmaids are clattering their cans, drops itself into what seems to Immaculata an infernal machine, and is whirled away in rolling thunder and smoke through the black network of tunnels that undermine our thoroughfares. She counts what her landlady called the gates, and gets out at Bishopsgate. Throbbing, hopeful, triumphant, on the tip-toe of expectation, she skims along the pavements like an eager swallow, glancing into the faces of the passers-by with her dark joyous eyes, which are clouded at times, though only momentarily, with a shadow of intense anxiety. The landlady was right enough in her description of the place ; it was just the

hour for going to business, and the streets were literally black with the hurrying figures of men, all flocking with brisk steps to the day's encounter with good fortune or the reverse. It seemed to the little Spanish girl that she had never seen so many men in all her life before. Who should dare to tell her that out of so great a number the brother she sought for was not to be found? She did not remark at all that she had not met anything feminine for twice the length of a street; did not for a moment notice that many pairs of masculine eyes were staring at her; certainly never dreamed of the startling picture she made, stemming the black-coated throng, her cheeks glowing against her mantilla's dusky folds, her blue eyes shining with expectant delight. All stared at her, many turned and looked after her, wondering; but gazing steadily far ahead, and unheeding those around her, Mary Immaculata had espied a face which was the face she was so confidently looking to see.

Who shall say where and how are made those mysterious assignments with Fate which one and all of us so strangely and unfailingly keep? How was it that John Bold, always so punctual, was that day ten minutes behind his usual hour for arriving at his office, and thus encountered Immaculata in his path, instead of remaining unaware of her existence for the rest of his natural life? Be that as it may, certain it is that he did notice her from a distance, said to himself that she was a beautiful child who had by accident got out of her proper place, and, being a true gentleman, he hastened forward to offer her his help. He was a tall, fair-haired man, with a good and clever face, a thick fair beard, and Saxon eyes. Ah, was he not like the picture of her father? said Mary Immaculata in a transport to herself as she sprang to meet him. She would have known him among a million, let alone in this paltry crowd. As he came forward quickly, his hat a little raised, asking courteously if he could be of use to her, she suddenly flew to his side and clasped his great arm with her little hands.

"My brother!" she exclaimed, in broken English, between laughing and sobbing. "I *knew* that we should know each other as soon as we should meet!"

It was of no use at all for the fair-haired man of business, belonging to matter-of-fact Bishopsgate, to assure the little crazy girl out of that romantic courtyard in Spain that he was not, and could not be, her brother. She simply did not hear what he said. The idea that she had found whom she had sought had taken possession of her brain. She thought he was assuring her of his brotherly affection, and she kept raving with joy at her success.

"Mercedes would not believe that you would recognize me," she cried, laughing, "and yet you knew me many yards away. I saw it from a distance coming into your eyes!"

By this time John Bold had made up his mind what to do, called a cab, and put the child into it, and, flinging urgent business to the winds, got into the vehicle beside her, and proceeded to accompany her to her home.

As they jolted along together, the idea of her madness faded from his mind. She told her story so clearly that he was obliged to perceive that her conduct was not due to insanity, but to the romantic mistake of an ardent and childlike nature, and he recognized in her a degree of simplicity and inexperience such as he never had met with before. He suffered her to hold his hand and pour forth her raptures all the way to Bloomsbury. In her own impassioned foreign way she related to him the history of her little life, told him about the dear old house at home, the courtyard, the fountain, the doves, the cactus flowers, the beautiful, brilliant, glorifying sun. How death had taken away her father and mother, how good Mercedes had been, how the longing for her English brother had haunted her—all this was placed before him in vivid colours by the most eloquent and exquisite lips (thought John Bold) he had ever heard or seen. Before her excitement had subsided

the lodging-house was reached, and the good-hearted John had made up his mind that it would kill the girl to be suddenly and roughly made aware of her delusion. He led her into the house, determined to ask for her protectress Mercedes, and delicately to reveal to her the mistake that had been made.

A cry from the landlady was his greeting as he entered the hall; a peal of happy laughter from Immaculata echoed it, and Mercedes' shrill voice joined in the chorus from the top of the staircase.

"Dear heart alive!" said the landlady, gazing at him with tears in her eyes. "*I am* proud as how it was me that was able to put her on the scent, sir! I knowed the City was the place to go a lookin' for you!"

"I assure you," stammered John Bold—"pray listen to me. I am anxious to explain."

"Time enough, sir," said the landlady, encouragingly. "All she wants is just to look at you, and not a bad sight for any one, I make bold to say, let alone a sister."

Immaculata had with trembling hands produced a little silken bag, which proved to contain a small faded miniature of a man bearing a certain resemblance to the gentleman who had been carried off by her so daringly from Bishopsgate. In an ecstasy of delight she flourished it before her captive and her landlady.

John Bold took it in his hand and examined it. "There is no doubt it is a little like me," he thought. "But then I know I have a parental portrait of a black-haired man on my dining-room wall at home, as different as possible from this. And I am not——"

"No wonder the poor gentleman is struck all of a heap at seeing a father's likeness come back to him from the grave," said the landlady, sympathetically. "I hear the old lady moving now, sir, and if you will come up stairs——"

"But, my dear madam——" began John Bold, firmly. He

could say no more, however, for the brown and withered and most worthy Mercedes had cast herself bodily into his arms.

The torrent of her Spanish words of welcome, thanksgiving, blessing, he was utterly unable to stem. He did not understand a word she said, and was obliged to stand silent and let the storm roll over his head. His disturbed looks were attributed to natural emotion, he was much too good-tempered and sympathetic to get angry, and he could only marvel inwardly at the strangely false position in which chance had placed him. Before half an hour had passed he was sitting at the breakfast table upstairs watching his supposed sister swallow the morsels which Mercedes insisted she should eat, and feeling more and more unwilling to cut short his visit by making a formal statement of the truth. Another hour went, and his courage was even fainter than before. On taking his leave at last, with promises to come again to-morrow, he resolved as he walked downstairs to insist upon making a clean breast of the matter to the landlady, and to ask her to break the truth to her lodgers during the course of the day. But when he got to the hall the landlady was nowhere to be seen, and, somewhat inconsistently breathing a sigh of relief, he let himself quietly out of the door.

It is quite impossible to defend John Bold's weak-mindedness in this matter; but it is an undoubted fact that for a considerable period of time after that eventful morning he did come every evening to that Bloomsbury lodging, and did take the position of a well-beloved brother with the charming girl who had captivated his heart. The dilemma in which he soon found himself was serious, and it was long before he could make up his mind to try to get out of it. Every day he became more and more afraid of Immaculata's disappointment, and perhaps anger, and the reproaches of the fiery though devoted Mercedes. Each morning he said to himself that to-morrow he must really write and reveal the truth, and yet each evening

found him sitting in the little dingy drawing-room where a sunny head had watched for him at the window, and sketching delightful plans for the future of his little sister. All sorts of pretty presents passed from him to her ; he took her and Mercedes to such amusements as a little girl and an old lady might enjoy ; and it was understood, that as soon as the summer should shine over England, they were all to go and dwell together in some enchanting country home. That this charming dream might come true, honest John Bold now hoped with all his heart.

At last it came upon him suddenly one day that the misunderstanding had gone a great deal too far, and that it was necessary for the happiness of all concerned that things should be put upon a proper footing. It was bright spring now, and even Mercedes allowed that English flowers had an exquisite charm of their own ; for Mary Immaculata's fair-bearded brother kept their rooms well-filled with the choicest that were to be had. The inevitable and long-deferred revelation dropped upon them one evening like a thunderbolt, when the door of the sitting-room, where Mercedes was dozing—dreaming of Spain—suddenly opened, and her nursling entered the room in a stream of sunlight, that fell upon her from the staircase window. Immaculata's face was pale, her hair in a blaze of gold, her brows knitted ; she looked like a beautiful spirit of wrath and grief, instead of the glad-faced girl she had been an hour ago. A letter was in her hand, which she flung to Mercedes.

"Come home, oh, come home to Spain !" she cried with a wail. "It has all been a falsehood, and I have no longer a brother !"

Mercedes started up amazed, snatched the letter (which had been written in Spanish, that she might be able to read it), glanced over the beginning of it, and flew into a passion. How she railed and denounced John Bold need not be detailed ; but,

suddenly desisting, she folded her little one to her heart and in softest cooing tones, told her to sorrow no more for an impostor, who was evidently unworthy of their regard. Though brothers might be a delusion, there was still that sunny courtyard at home, in Spain, where the doves and the cactus were awaiting their return. Mary Immaculata lay upon her breast like a crushed flower, and Mercedes, in the end, carried her to bed, after which the irate and energetic old lady began bustling about the rooms, gathering up her various little possessions, and packing them into bags and trunks, with a view to their journey home. Not another day longer than was absolutely necessary would she stay in this villanous England !

Having thus worked off a little of the fever of her rage Mercedes sat down, quite late at night, close to the lamp, with her spectacles on, and picking up the obnoxious letter and shaking it as she would have liked to shake the writer, she proceeded with several sniffs and snorts to read through the epistle. After a time, as she proceeded with her study, a cry broke from her lips, a light shone over her face, she got up and ran about the room, clapping her withered hands together, and finally pattered into her "baby's" chamber.

"But there is something here that we did not see, Immaculata !" she began. "Why were we so foolish as not to read all he had got to say ? Mr. John Bold—that is the name—declares that he cannot regret he is not your brother because he so earnestly desires that you will be his wife !"

Mary Immaculata sat up in her bed and stared at the good old lady's triumphant face.

"A husband for you, my darling ! Think of such an excellent, such an affectionate husband !"

"I do not want a husband, I want my brother !" wailed the girl, and buried her face in her pillows.

The end of it all was that John Bold was kept in disgrace for a time. He was sulked at for a month, scolded for six weeks,

and finally, when he threatened to withdraw and offend her no more, Immaculata discovered that it was better to exchange a brother for a husband than to lose altogether so good a friend. Mercedes now sits by her fountain in her courtyard alone, and feeds her doves and nurses her cactus-flowers ; and sometimes she pauses in the telling of her beads to picture in her mind a charming English home she had learned to know, and to ask herself wonderingly—where, after all, is Immaculata's real brother ?

ROSA MULHOLLAND.

Thoughts in a Library.

BOOKS, which form one of the chief joys of some lives, are treated with indifference by the majority of men. Everybody reads in these days, but there are no signs that the facilities afforded for reading have increased the love of literature. People read novels for amusement, and newspapers for facts and opinions. In the earlier years of life classical writers are studied, since the fate of an examination may depend upon them; but the passion that urges a man to seek knowledge for its own sake, and to treasure up with exquisite delight whatever is great in letters, is comparatively a rare gift. The reason is obvious. To cultivate literature, a man should be at leisure and free from anxiety; but leisure, as George Eliot has told us, "is gone where the spinning-wheels are gone, and the pack-horses, and the slow waggons, and the pedlars who brought bargains to the door on sunny afternoons;" and most of us drive through life at such a tearing pace that there is no opportunity of lingering to enjoy the road.

What, then, is the use of books, which do not serve as mere sign-posts? To enlarge the intellect, to stimulate the imagination, to make the way less rugged—nay, even to fill it with beauty: these are among the purposes of literature; but when the mind is otherwise occupied such purposes are not recognized. Books, therefore, are seldom looked upon as necessities in a house. Old china is preferred to them, and so are Chippendale chairs. They are kept out of sight, like the children's toys, instead of occupying the place of honour which they merit. In great mansions there is of course a library, for that is as much a part of the establishment as the family plate; but in the homes of the middle-class, books in any

considerable number are rarely to be seen among the cherished possessions. Even the volumes read are generally obtained from Mudie's or the Grosvenor. A man may spend pounds yearly on tobacco without a thought of extravagance, but will tell you he cannot afford to buy books. And yet, in this changeful life, what more constant friends can he have? There is no hour of darkness which a good book may not brighten, no moment of exultation to which it will not add a zest.

But in order that the full power of books may be felt they should be personal property. We must have learnt to know them and to love them, and be able to take a volume down from the shelf at the moment it is called for. It is a happy proof of an author's fame when his presence becomes so necessary to readers that they are glad to have him with them at all seasons; not that his books are being always read, but that one likes to have the power of reading them at any moment of leisure. In a large library we see hundreds of volumes that are as good as dead. They have a use perhaps still, best known to plodders like Mr. Casaubon, but the little life they once had is gone out of them wholly. Some of these volumes are not thirty, or even twenty, years old; and their authors (can we doubt it?) anticipated for these children of their toil a long and brilliant career. Some of them, more ancient in date, were neglected as soon as born; some, we may remember, had a few years of brilliant reputation, and after lighting up the heavens with their brightness, fell, like a spent rocket, into darkness.

The vanity of human hopes is seldom seen more painfully than in a large collection of books. They tell of so much labour, so many aspirations, so many unfulfilled wishes. "A great library," said Swift, "always makes me melancholy, where the best author is as much squeezed, and as obscure, as a porter at a coronation."

This is not quite the case. It is not the best authors that grow obscure; it is the authors whose talent served a tempo-

rary purpose, and who, living for the day, died when their day was over. The writer who has been of service to his generation, though he can claim no place with the immortals, may have the satisfaction of knowing that he has done a good work, and possibly a more solid work, than the brilliant neighbours who stand near him on the shelf. It may be unpleasant to realize that the dust will soon cover his literary remains, but so long as what he has done has lived at all, it behoves him to be content. It is not the sincere plodders whose books have been written with an honest purpose that claim our commiseration ; it is the men who have prostituted their genius for the sake of money, or to secure a selfish object. In the last century every writer had, or pretended to have, a moral purpose ; and the coarsest books of a coarse age were all written, if we may credit their authors, in the cause of virtue. Times are changed, and now you can scarcely offend an imaginative writer more than by discovering a moral in his work. Art, it is said, knows nothing of morality ; as if, forsooth, the artist ceases to be a man. His nature, be it good or evil, expresses itself in what he does ; and while the artist's first purpose is not that of a teacher, something, whether positive or negative, he cannot fail to teach.

"Books," says Lord Bacon, "ought to have no patrons but truth and reason." A wise saying, which might have been remembered with great advantage by some of his contemporaries. The adulation heaped by the Elizabethan poets, and again by the Restoration poets, on the monarchs from whom they expected favours, and on the noblemen to whom they dedicated their poems, is undignified and offensive. Spenser is a grievous offender in this way. One of the greatest poets of all time may be seen in the attitude of a spaniel crouching at his master's feet. Fuller, as the elder Disraeli reminds us, wrote twelve dedications to his "Church History," and a great number of inscriptions besides, addressed to people from whom

he had received, or hoped to receive, favours. Cowley, the most popular poet of his age, uttered the most fulsome, and well-nigh blasphemous, praise of the second Charles in the hope of being repaid for his verses; and both Waller and Dryden exalted Oliver Cromwell when his star was in the ascendant; and when he fell, sung a pæan, with equal facility, "upon his Majesty's happy return." Milton alone, or nearly alone among the poets of his age, knew how to praise, but was unable to flatter.

A new system has altered all this, but possibly the disease in another, although milder form, still lingers among authors. Instead of flattering monarchs and noblemen, they are sometimes prone, for the sake of profit, to flatter the intellectual if not the moral vices of the public. To swim with the tide instead of resisting it, is the smoothest course for writers as well as for politicians.

We must not expect the lover of books to be entirely impartial. He has some favourites, be sure, which he likes, because he likes them, and scorns to give a reason why. A man does not care to criticise his dearest friends, nor will he stay to ask how they came to be so dear. This personal affection will account oftentimes for the bad criticism of good critics. Some delightful associations linked with books may give them a charm unfelt by the ordinary reader. At a great and happy crisis of life a volume perhaps was at our side, the words of which henceforth carry a double meaning, and the pages have a light upon them reflected from our own eyes. This may be the secret of the admiration expressed by Coleridge, and in a lesser degree by Charles Lamb, for the plaintive sonnets of Bowles; it may account for many of the critical vagaries that astonish mankind.

The very sight of a library should prove a warning against prejudice. Upon its shelves the most violent opponents stand cheek by jowl. Milton may be supported by Salmasius on the

one side, and by Bishop Hall on the other ; Pope may touch the leathern dress of his arch enemy Dennis ; Wordsworth may press against the once famous critic who told him his poetry would never do ; and Byron be confronted by Mrs. Stowe. Some wag, on malice intent, might even place the volumes of Croker on the same shelf with the essays of Macaulay, or bind Robert Montgomery's "Satan" with the "Lays of Ancient Rome." Macaulay and Southey had few subjects in common, but they sympathized heartily with one another in their passion for books. "I had rather," said the former, "be a poor man in a garret, with plenty of books, than a king who did not love reading ;" and Southey, writing to Caroline Bowles, says : "My books arrived a fortnight ago. A son of my old friend Lightfoot, who happened to be here, and assisted in unpacking them, told his father he had never seen any man look so happy as I did on that occasion. And I was as happy as the arrival of eighty-nine folios, and about as many smaller fry, could make me. The honeymoon is not yet over. Oh, dear Caroline ! what a blessing it is to have an unsatiable appetite of this kind, which grows by what it feeds on, and for which food can never be wanting." Opinion, however, on this subject is not uniform, even among men of letters. Wordsworth, it may be remembered, treated books a little contemptuously ; so did Carlyle, who termed reading a weariness of the flesh, and observed that after studying about forty good books, nothing new was to be met with in the generality of libraries. Yet while deploring the vast quantity of books with which the world was cumbered, Carlyle, by a happy inconsistency, discovered that his "practical use" in life would be to add to their number.

The books that feed a man's intellect and heart are, we may admit with Carlyle, comparatively few in number. No volume, it may be safely said, has much influence which is not considered worthy of a second or even a third perusal. There are books indeed, "the precious life-blood of master spirits," that deserve

to be read yearly, monthly—may we not say daily?—books that, like the immortal flowers of Paradise, have a lasting fragrance and beauty. They become a part of our lives in youth, they grow dearer as we grow older. As our knowledge deepens, so does their infinite variety; and thus they resemble the exhaustless charm and prodigality of Nature. On the other hand, the mass of books are characterless, and with these the ordinary reader is apt to be content. Possibly they prevent ennui, possibly they promote sleep, and in either case do some small service; but there can be no doubt that the desultory reading, so common in our day, is inimical to soundness of judgment and accuracy of thought. It is really not absolutely necessary to be acquainted with the last new book, even though it be a novel; and the idlest reader might occasionally find amusement in a story that is fifty years old.

Walking through a great library, one thought strikes us prominently. In olden times it was possible for a man to be learned and yet to have read few books. In the present day the acquisition of universal knowledge is impossible. The student must be content to be wholly ignorant of many things; and one of the most important of his acquisitions will be the knowledge of what it is essential he should master, and what without detriment he can leave to the study of specialists.

JOHN DENNIS.

Travelling Thoughts on the Acropolis.

(WRITTEN IN ATHENS, 1883.)

LAST night, at a concert, the strings of the violoncello, touched by a skilful hand, wailed with unutterable longing, as if bent on stirring the unsoundable depths of the soul to new desires, effort, and aspiration.

While under the influence of this spell I could not but wonder, seeing how near we were to the spot where Plato wrote, what would have been the dictum of that mighty ancient on the state of sweet trouble into which the sounds had clearly thrown the large and attentive audience there assembled. Would these to him have been "Lydian airs," and as such condemned as enervating and subversive of virtue? I could not tell, but the doubt seemed at once to have opened to my perception the path along which the soul had been journeying since Plato's time, with something of the loss, and much of the gain, that had been found on the perilous trail. What I saw chiefly was the greater extension, fruitfulness, and dignity which had been allowed to the human affections; how love, instead of being "in narrowest working shut," a mere stirring of the blood, rarely recognized in any other connection, had been gathered out of the dust, set upon a throne, known for divine even when combined with more earthly elements, and worshipped at its purest as one with the creative life. Seeing the new depths of sorrow, the new tragic possibilities thus opened to humanity, one is tempted to ask of the spirit of Progress: "What will you finally make of the hapless soul of man?" But the question receives no answer; only the path lies before us, and we cannot choose but follow its unknown mazes. Meantime we may hope that the travail of the human spirit has not been for

nought. With the exception of a few penetrating souls of poets, there are doubtless reaches in it never explored by the ancients, if for the majority of them they had any existence. We have lost much—lost an art perfect within its own limits ; and this, as it was then possessed, we can hardly hope to regain. But a new horizon—no, not an horizon, for horizon there is none—but a new vision has opened for us : a vaster vision of the Infinite ; and all our art, if it be worth our endeavour, must be the expression of the manifold experience of the soul in its enlarged conditions. For a mind coming into contact first with the remains of this marvellous Athenian world—this concrete reason, this freshly-blown flower of beauty—there seems a likelihood of too great an absorption in the irretrievable past ; of a difficulty felt in holding its own in fruition and in hope, in the present and future. I own to something of surprise in not having found it thus. Never more than in the midst of the wonders of ancient Athens have I felt the value and significance of what the human heart and brain have since striven to utter, and, in uttering, to make clear to themselves ; and never have I been more fully convinced of the fact that even in art they have not yet spoken their last or most pregnant word. If here we first learn—learn in unspeakable joy of the free spirit, learn so as never to forget—what the Greeks have done, we are kindled by a something of communicated impulse to feel what they have left undone.

This Reason, which broke into such matchless blossom of beauty, was at its highest and most typical moment of development, somewhat cold as well as clear. As in the breath of Athena, the lofty Queen of the Air, the sweetness and light that was in it was something in excess of the warmth. It was not unfitly typified by the goddess who was the genius of its birthplace, that austere maiden sprung from the brain of Zeus, in whose honour all the worthiest of what is here to see, has been set up. Reading on the spot in Plato's " Republic," what has been said in relation to woman

by one who was of the noblest of Athenian citizens, one is led to confess to the severe logic which has directed his conclusions from the premiss of such an initial conception. The Athenian world, more than that of its neighbour States, still more than that of some other ancient peoples, was a world without woman in any true sense. It is little likely that the position assigned to the sex by Plato, would be lower than that which accorded with the views of the generality of his countrymen, and with him, woman was the lesser man ; no more, no other, the only distinction which he recognizes as pertaining to sex, being the one physical fact of separate functions in generating and bringing to the birth. I am not sure that a contemplation of the treatment of the female form in the marbles of Pheidias would not go some way to suggest that the great master shared this view. Whatever there is of tenderness or sympathy in his art, mighty and severe, is lavished, not upon the womankind, but upon the youth of the other sex. Something of this may be accredited to the circumstance that the impression made by the latter, constantly beheld unclothed in the gymnasium, was more direct ; but still more was due to the subordinate, the even contemned position, in which all the qualities, mental and moral, of which woman is the typical exponent, were held. To the absence of this blended life may be attributed that limit to fecundity too early reached by Grecian thought.

It was reserved for another people, a people of deeper affections, and more abiding sense of the power of the unseen spiritual, to put first into the hand of the woman, and make her share with her mate, the freedom typified in the fruit of the Tree of Life. The Greek desired it for himself ; found it "pleasant to the taste, and good for food," but never conceived of it as a universal heritage and essential condition of human development. The Attic love of liberty accommodated itself perfectly with the institution of slavery for a moiety of

mankind, and the permanent subjection of its less militant half.

But if no generous dream of equal justice so much as visited even the finer of the spirits among this great people, with the fetters that it was agreed to fix for ever upon slaves, captives of war, and women, it was also thought desirable to bind the highest flights of human thought. We have seen the scant honour and place accorded in the "Republic" to the affections. If women were only to form part of it on the condition of becoming unsexed, so also was Poetry, with the revered name of Homer as its representative, driven from the scene, only to be re-admitted when deprived of the means of rising into the empyrean, bitted, harnessed, and broken to the yoke of the State. It will be averred that the feminine principle was persecuted in good company. Much is asked by the philosopher of the poet; but contemptuously little is expected of him. To make good his place in the ordered scheme of things, he must be a legislator, a physician, and a priest of the cultus of the hour. He is none of these things; not even a healer, though a soother, through his music, of the woes of life. What he is, is a living instrument, at once so finely attuned and so discriminating, that it resumes and gives back in rhythmic cadence the most essential of the leading tones rising from the heart of humanity in any given time and place. The winged soul of the great poet is the freest thing known to man. Although law is of its very life, it is a higher law, and therefore a more universal, than that contemplated in any, the wildest, Utopia. The leaders of men cannot put it in harness, and drive it along the high roads of civilization, over their mountain passes, and through their fever swamps, in the van of their great guns. It knows nothing of expediency; and as, at its best and highest, it comprehends and sympathizes with all humanity, it is with difficulty prevailed upon to take sides in any strife. It is a witness to the struggle with antagonistic forces in which the life of

man consists. Of all the testimony bequeathed us by the ages, none is so intimate, or so sincere. Poetry is not history, but it is more ; it is the informing spirit, which guides us through the shapeless detritus out of which history is constructed. Like that which brooded upon the face of the waters, it brings order out of chaos ; like the breath which passed upon the dry bones, it causes the dead to live. Without it the percipient soul, the soul that has a wide look-out upon the universe, sees its facts so disjointed and misplaced that it falls into perplexity and despair. Poetry is, in sooth, the most essential form of truth, a faint adumbration of the mind of the Highest. But in poetry, as in all things else, we have our treasure in earthen vessels ; the delicately attuned instrument is easily at fault, its many subtle elements are difficult to hold in balance. Yet, looking at its vates, one thing will be seen to be common to every soul of them. However wild and lawless in their lives and mere personal speech, they become sane when their singing robes are fairly on, and they are lifted to the height which to them is the height of vision. In the wildest ravings of the man whose lips some oracle has only passingly touched, there is more of that sense which the unconscious human sheep, who arrogate it to themselves, mean when they speak of it as "common," than is to be found in the bleating of an entire flock of them.

If a fashion prevails in the modern world, as in the Athens of Plato, of affecting to undervalue the debt which the world owes to its inspired singers, such have partly themselves to blame for it ; they think too much of the craft which the veriest journeyman can learn for his pains, and too little of that vantage ground to which, if poets indeed, their subtler spirits must occasionally bear them. More, perhaps, than half a poet was the great Athenian who taught in the groves of Academe ; but falling short of the whole, how was he distanced by the men whose thoughts, in becoming concrete, took upon them a life beyond that of the unincarnate Reason. In the great trinity of

dramatists, Æschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, poetry and womanhood, love and truth, were justified as against philosophy. Through them poetry has supplied one of the vastest, one of the most worshipful, of the schemes that the world has known for the solution of the ever-recurring enigma of being, and has anticipated with prophetic vision the time when the "last shall be first, and the first last;" when, in truth, there shall be no more last or first, but man and woman shall become as one flesh. How else but by that higher view which belonged of right to the poet, and to none other—that upward impulse which is the gift of the spirit which in turn bestows wings on the thought—could Sophocles have attained to an apprehension of such transcendent nobleness, such unvisited depths of emotional life, as he has shown us in "Antigone," and in a scarcely less degree in "Electra," "Ismene," and "Deianeira?" How came that spirit, free as the genius of Poetry itself, to take in this remote hard time the form of a woman—which meant, as it still means, more than half the world over—of a bond-servant? From what a majestic archetype in his own generous soul must the poet have worked to have brought forth a figure of such coherent individuality, such awful beauty, such a penetrating sense of the underlying realities of life, in an age when the virtues proper to women were mostly the invention of men! "Wouldst thou aught more of me than merely death?" What a fine contempt of the accidents of being speaks in these words! As we read, the maiden such as Pheidias might have shaped her had Sophocles stood over him, rises between us and the page. The whole of the succeeding dialogue between Antigone and the tyrant Creon, falls, stroke on stroke, like the clash of swords at fence. The woman seems to rise to more than mortal height in the unequal contest: she is sublime, almost terrible, in her fearlessness; we are awed, we shrink before her in her unconquerable pride of duty; and then we seem to see the statue quiver, the stony aspect flush with life, the image that

seemed so obdurate melt like a glacier in the springtide. A word has done it, revealing the source of her strength. "An enemy is hated even in death," says Creon. "Love and not hate is that whereof I know." That is Antigone. Again Creon: "Down, then, to death; and if thou need'st must love, love thou the dead." And she accepted the fiat. Not Dante, not Shakespeare's self, has ever given us a more affecting picture, or revealed in so overpowering a flash the living fountain of woman's strength.

This creature, who is so real to us who behold her over a chasm of two thousand years—so individual, bearing as she does through all her nobleness the marks of the accidents of her doomed life—is nevertheless a type of essential womanhood. It is no "lesser man" that we have before us, no sexless being; but a creature whom Nature has fashioned tenderly for tender uses. Yes, we will trust our cause, all causes, to the poets, the *Seers*; for, of all human witness, theirs alone is true. Philosophies are for a day, and systems fail, succeed and demolish each other; but the words of the great poet are monumental, shaped and welded into enduring beauty; and of all that we possess, this element of poetry, wheresoever found, is the only thing of which ultimate time approves the truth.

How instructive is the whole of that fifth book of the "Republic" which treats of the "Education of Women!"—what a light it lets in on the history and tendency of Greek thought! It is the masculine spirit working alone that we trace in this portion of the wonderful Utopia—the Babel Tower whose malarious ruins are still to be found in Constantinople and elsewhere under the rule of the Turk. Was ever an outrage so callous perpetrated upon the human affections as that advocated in this book of the divine Plato? What, this dialectician who has exhausted himself in the commendation of justice, will wrench from the physically weaker half of humankind the God-entrusted lives which have been nourished by their own,

and make common property of that beside which there is no possession on earth which can be said to be real or personal? When I read and mark these things, I turn from the wisdom of Greece; it has become to me foolishness. I turn from the Acropolis, where the golden Parthenon stands, trembling as of its own beauty upon the palpitating ether; I look away from it, and the system which, within it and around, has reached its fullest expansion. I seek a wisdom higher and more fruitful than the unmated Reason: the wisdom that is justified of her children. I aspire to equal justice, I look for unbounded liberty. Not justice for a class, which, called by its proper name, is privilege; not freedom alone for the strong, which in some of its relations is tyranny; but freedom and justice founded like the Pyramids—still better, like the everlasting hills, on the broad bases of universal humanity. Yes, moved by such thoughts, I turn my back upon that fairest of temples ever made with hands, and I see in face of it, on Mars' Hill, a man, in whose eyes, blinded by the light which met him on the way to Damascus, all its monuments, all its pride, are as nothing. My soul reaches out from the circle of art and policy in which it has for a while been so serenely dwelling, as from a shell that has become too narrow, and I welcome this voice with a new feeling, with the joy wherewith we hail the dawn. It was but a glimmer of the coming day, imperceptible in the luminous Attic night; but the power of the Immutable was behind it. I seem to hear the travel-soiled stranger, with his only partial command of the sensitive Attic tongue, his fiery zeal, his love for men and his belief in his power to serve them. What is the artistic side of Athenian life to him? The only monument which claims his regard, is the Altar to the Unknown God. In his desire to be "all things to all men, in order that he may save some," he seizes upon this, and makes it the text of his persuasive discourse, the pretext for the delivery of his message. Here then for the

first time the mighty bronze image of the Zeus-born Athene—costly with labour, priceless with genius—was confronted with the herald of Jesus of Nazareth.

The woman, issue of the brain of man, had done her best for the world ; it remains to be seen—it even yet remains to see—what can be compassed by the man, born of the heart of woman.

EMILY PFEIFFER.

The London Sparrow.

A HUNDRED years it seemeth since I lost thee
O beautiful world of birds, O blessèd birds
That come and go!—the thrush, the golden bill
That sweetly fluteth after April rain,
In forest depths the cuckoo's mystic voice,
And in the breezy fields the yellow-hammer,
And over all the mounting lark, that makes
The blue heaven palpitate with ecstasy!
Nor in this island only: far beyond
The seas encircling it swift memory flies
To other brighter lands, and leaves behind
The swallow and the dove: in hot sweet woods
The gaudy parrots scream; reedy and vast
Stretch ibis-and flamingo-haunted marshes.

I from such worlds removed to this sad world
Of London we inhabit now together,
O Sparrow, often in my loneliness,
No other friend remaining, turn to thee,
Like some imprisoned wretch who, in his cell,
A cricket hears, and, listening to its chirp,
Forgets the vanished sunshine and the laughter.
Not oft, O wingèd Arab of the streets,
Thou dusty little scavenger—a bird
Ambitious bard should blush to name—not oft
Canst claim such victory: for I have known
The kings and glorious nobles of the race
Whose homely mean ambassador thou art;—
Imperial-crested birds in purple clothed

And splendid scarlet, swans in bridal white,
And many a rainbow-tinted tanager.

Ah ! how couldst thou thy birthright, liberty
In breezy woodlands, where were springs for thirst
And many-flavoured fruits to feed upon,
Resign for such a place ?—to live long years
From Nature sweet in exile voluntary,
Nourished on mouldy crumbs, ignoble bird !
Imprisoned in a lurid atmosphere
That maketh all things black and desolate,
Until, as in a coin illegible
To keenest Antiquary, lost are all
The signs that mark thy kind—the pretty gloss
That Nature gave thee clouded and confounded,
Till to the ornithologist thou art
A bird ambiguous : to others, too,
A thing offensive. Sometimes even I,
Aroused to fury by thy barrel-organ
That puts my thoughts to flight, would gladly hale thee
Before the magistrate. For thou hast not
The coyness of thy kind—for awful man
No veneration ; noisy, impudent,
Begrimed with soot, the chimney-sweep of birds
To minds æsthetic.

Roughly have I used
The liberty of a friend, and yet I know
I love thee, Sparrow, and thy voice to me—
A dweller once in summer-lands—brings back
Responsive joy, as unto him that walks,
Pensive at eventide, the robin's song
'Midst wintry loneliness. Oh, my lost Muse,
If aught of thy sweet spirit is remaining

After my long neglect, in gratitude
To this my frequent, welcome visitor,
Whose little pipe from out discordant noises
Springs like a flower amidst a waste of rocks
To cheer my exile, I will strike again
The quaint and rust-corroded instrument
I played of yore, and to the Sparrow sing
My latest song ; albeit now the chords
Give 'neath my touch an unfamiliar sound
To sadden me—the note of time and change.

At dawn thy voice is loud—a merry voice
When other sounds are few and faint. Before
The muffled thunders of the Underground
Begin to shake the houses, and the noise
Of eastward traffic fills the thoroughfares,
Thy voice then welcomes day. Oh, what a day!—
How foul and haggard-faced ! See, where she comes
In garments of the chill discoloured mists
Stealing unto the west with noiseless foot
Through dim forsaken streets. Is she not like,
As sister is to sister, unto her
Whose stained cheeks the nightly rains have wet
And made them grey and seamed and desolate,
Beneath the arches of the bitter bridge ?
And thou, O Sparrow, from the windy ledge
Where thou dost nestle—creaking chimney-pots
For softly-sighing branches ; sooty slates
For leafy canopy ; rank steam of slums
For flowery fragrance ; and for star-lit woods
This waste that frights, a desert desolate
Of fabrics gaunt and grim and smoke-begrimed,
By goblin misery haunted ; scowling towers
Of cloud and stone, gigantic tenements

And castles of despair, by spectral gleams
Of fitful lamps illumined :—from such place
Canst thou, O Sparrow, welcome day so foul ?
Ay, not more blithe of heart in forests dim
The golden-throated thrush awakes what time
The leaves atremble whisper to the breath,
The flowery breath, of morning azure-eyed !

Never a morning comes but I do bless thee,
Thou brave and faithful Sparrow, living link
That binds us to the immemorial past ;
O blithe heart in a house so melancholy,
And keeper for a thousand gloomy years
Of many a gay tradition ; heritor
Of Nature's ancient cheerfulness, for thee
'Tis ever Merry England ! Never yet
In thy companionship of centuries
With man in lurid London didst regret
Thy valiant choice ;—yea, even from the time
When all its low-roofed rooms were sweet with scents
From summer fields, where shouting children plucked
The floating lily from the reedy Fleet,
Scaring away the timid water-hen.

Awake at morn when still the wizard Sleep
Refracts from twilight mists the broken rays
Of consciousness, I hear thy lulling voice,
Like water softly warbling, or like wind
That wanders in the ancient moonlit trees :
And lo, with breezy feet I roam abroad ;
Before me startled from the shadowy fern
Upsprings the antlered deer and flees away,
And moors before me open measureless
Whereon I seek for Morning washed in dews,

Immaculate. To other realms I fly
To wait its coming, walking where the palms
Unmoving stand like pillars that uphold
Some hoary vast cathedral. Lift my heart
To thee, O holy daughter of the sun—
Sweet harbinger—the Dawn! The stars grow pale,
And I am fainting by the way, oppressed
With incense from a thousand forest flowers
All prescient of thy coming! Lo, how vast
From mist and cloud the awful mountains rise,
Where ever up with incorporeal feet
I climb to meet the dead Peruvian's god!
O swift approaching glory, blind me not
With shafts ineffable! But re-awake
In me the sacred passion of the past,
Long quenched in blood by spirits uninformed
That slew thy worshippers! My senses swim.—
Sustain, or bear me back to earth! My feet
Scarce feel the rolling cloud, or touch they still
The awful summit of the world? Far, far
Beneath, the dark blue ocean moves; the waves
Lift up their lightning crests; the lonely earth
Is jubilant; the rivers laugh; the hills
In forests clothed, or soaring crowned with snow
In barren everlasting majesty,
Are all in gold and purple swathed for joy
That thou art coming!

Vanished is my dream;
Even while I bowed and veiled my eyes before
The insufferable splendour of the sun
It vanished quite, and left me with this pale,
This phantom morning! With my dream thou fled'st,
O blithe remembrancer, and in thy flight

Callest thy prattling fellows, prompters too
Of dreams perchance, from many a cloudy roof
To flit, a noisy rain of sparrows, down
To snatch a hasty breakfast from the roads,
Undaunted by the thund'rous noise and motion :
But like the petrel—fearless, fitful seeker,
The fluctuating bird with ocean's wastes
And rage familiar, tossed with tossing billows—
So, gleaner unregarded, flittest thou—
Now, as of old, and in the years to come,
Nature's one witness, till the murmuring sound
Of human feet unnumbered, like the rain
Of summer pattering on the forest leaves
Fainter and fainter falling 'midst the ruin,
In everlasting silence dies away.

W. H. HUDSON.

Bogeys of Provincial Life :

SMALL-TALK.

IF speech be, as some philologists aver, the crowning development of the human race, the essential feature of our divergence from the animals, there is something at once tragic and comic in the uses to which this noble, even divine, attribute is occasionally put. There is a tragedy in the slender vocabulary of taciturn lives, the paucity of whose desires, and meagreness of whose sympathies may be gauged by their comparative dumbness. If there be a sorrowful suggestiveness in this silence of the poor, there is a pitiful comedy in the babble and gossip of those who, from too much comfort and excess of leisure, have time to busy themselves with their neighbours' petty affairs. Some of our best novelists, women novelists especially, Miss Austen, Mrs. Oliphant, Mrs. Gaskell, Mrs. Lynn Linton, supreme over all—George Eliot, have given humorous and incisive pictures of provincial life with its thistle-down of rumour for ever flying, winged by idle speculation, envy, malice and uncharitableness ; they have portrayed the great little things that engender grave quarrels, and chronicled the small talk of imaginations constantly exercising themselves upon trifles.

Dwellers in large towns are apt to think that our novelists force their contrasts for artistic purposes, or that, as it not unfrequently happens, the scenes they describe being set in times when means of communication were slower, the description no longer applies. They think that now when steam and electricity have annihilated distance, when the world lies as it were on our breakfast-table, brought there in a penny morning newspaper, the ideas of provincial life have grown enlarged and

the matter of its speech altered. Those who live in provincial towns know that this is an illusion ; that middle class provincial life is as narrow as it was in its scope, and as limited in its talk ; that the above-named novelists, far from having exaggerated, have by the touch of romance brightened the scenes they have depicted ; that what forms a background of dulness in the book makes the whole picture in real life. Incidentally we may remark, that so far as the large majority of provincial women are concerned, the newspaper does not exist ; that national and continental interests have no share of their thoughts. Irresponsiveness to ideas, absorption in details, division into coteries, and tattle, or the less malicious small-talk, which is the subject of this paper, still rule the provincial town. The surface of its life may be in a manner altered, but the spirit of it remains the same. It is that of quelling the individual ; of hostile attitude towards any manifestation of originality ; for originality means difficulty to be understood by others, and the first imperative demand it makes upon all—that which the gossip of all its tongues insists upon, lashing all who do not submit, is uniformity of habits and notions, we had almost written of ideas.

Mere tattle, as distinguished from scandal, is not ill-natured ; it exercises itself much on the doings of superiors, on every detail concerning those social chieftainesses whose clothes are made according to London fashions, and who have the air of having seen the world lying outside the provincial horizon ; it spreads itself with dribbling leisureliness over dress, ailments, the worries relating to servants, and the rearing of children. Any forthcoming amusement calls forth all its powers of speculation. Flirtations afford a favourite field for the idle tattler's observations. The attitude towards each other of a couple suspected of being tenderly disposed ; the longing looks cast by the young ladies at the curate as they cluster round the pulpit ; any show of extra smartness, all the follies and weak-

nesses of vanity, are commented upon with idle innocent levity. We know a country-town where the probability of a wealthy spinster on the wrong side of forty-five mating with a widower, her neighbour and coeval, continues to be, as it has been for some years, the topic of unflagging conversation. The respective ages of people supplies another exciting theme. To unravel the problem of the number of a lady's years an amount of calculation is brought into play that properly directed might solve a proposition of Euclid ; but the provincial mind is biassed and invariably either adds to the sum or outrageously deducts from it,—the latter being held to be a fine form of flattery in addressing the person. Nor is it the womankind only who idly babble and prattle ; for the elderly men join in. There is the retired military man—the colonel or old Indian officer—who is a sort of link between the first and second rates, and, like a great white butterfly, hovers over the town. This hoary-headed individual is paternal with the young ladies, inclined to be serviceable, pleasant and complimentary to any genial wearer of skirts. He relates gossip by the yard ; tells his mischievous story vividly, seasoning it with a laugh that suggests all the innuendoes not said in words, and seems to be exploring all the corners where scandal lurks. There is the prosy old gentleman, who has made nothing of his life, but who is well connected, usually smug and slow of speech, and who has at his fingers' ends the ramifications, from root to bough, of every genealogical tree in the place. The sunset of this old gentleman's days is spent in gossip. He talks of the weather and the crops with the farmers ; he discusses the news with the tradespeople ; he is an authority who may be safely relied upon as to who should and who should not be made members of the lawn-tennis club. He plays cards, and is a general favourite with the ladies, who are charmed to hear him trace the pedigrees of their neighbours.

The following struck us as the perfect expression of a mind in placid vacuity :—

"Maggie," said a fragile-looking old lady, whose pale face recorded the passage over it of years, but not of life; "I can't think where Mrs. Waddy is gone to. She passed two hours ago, and she has not yet returned. Now she cannot have gone to the Sandys, because they are gone away into the country; and she cannot have gone to the Smiths, because I saw Mr. and Mrs. Smith and the children go to church just before she passed; and I am sure she would not have gone by the lane, for there is fever in it. I am really troubled to know where she is gone to."

"Mother," said the daughter, reflecting, "perhaps she went past again without your seeing her."

"No, Maggie, that is impossible. I never stirred from the window, or took my eyes from the street, for I wanted to know where she had gone to."

To Maggie's suggestion that it might not have been Mrs. Waddy after all—

"But it was she," replied the old lady with some asperity. "She had her puce petticoat on."

"Mrs. Ladlum, mother, has just such a puce petticoat," replied Meg.

"No, Meg. I know what I am saying; Mrs. Ladlum's petticoat has a broad black stripe to it, and Mrs. Waddy's petticoat has a narrow stripe, and this was the one with the narrow stripe; and what is more, there is no other petticoat in the town like these two, for I tried to get one the other day, and I could not. Harris said to me there was not another to be had."

"Well, mother," said Meg, seizing at last the perplexing character of the situation. "I had perhaps better slip round to see if I can hear any news of her. Will you come with me?" she added, turning to her friend; but the latter somewhat impatiently refused, vowing she could see no earthly interest attaching itself to Mrs. Waddy's movements.

"My dear, you take no interest in your neighbours," severely remarked the old lady; "it is your great fault, this want of interest in your neighbours. Yes, Maggie, I would like you to step round and see, for I am troubled to think where she has gone to."

George Eliot has humorously described the dismal delight the provincial mind takes in the contemplation of ailments—a habit springing, it may be, from a deep-rooted tendency, perceptible among the listless, to look upon gloom as righteous, and upon happiness as in a manner sinful, a theft committed upon the state of bliss to come. We knew one old lady whose sufferings were the talk of every tea-table where she lived. The stricken dame was not unmindful of the fact that her physical torments concentrated all the attention of the little town. She was elated and supported by hearing the details of her symptoms constantly discussed in her presence; she herself would enlighten an uninitiated stranger concerning them; shewing her emaciated form with no beggarly appeal for pity, but with a perceptible pitiful touch of dignity in her manner as of one who felt her self-importance at being thus afflicted. "Ah!" she said to me, with a suspicion of jealousy at the thought of a future rival, "when I'm gone, it will be many a day before one can say she suffered like me. There's not one in the town would let her say that. I think they'll all miss coming to hear news of me when I'm gone." There was a grain of unconscious humour in the recognition of the blank the cessation of talk concerning her afflictions would cause in the place.

Infinitely more mischievous is the small talk which has for its object the more intimate concerns of the neighbours' fortune, love affairs, religious convictions; and this sort of talk is disseminated by a variety of characters. There is the tattler, mischievous from a darling habit of mind, who promotes gossip instinctively as a magpie steals. There is the keen tattler of

inquisitorial habits, who, once on the scent of a love affair or a mystery, must explore it to its source, follow it in its progress, and acquaint the curious world with the conclusion arrived at. These policemen in petticoats have the instinct of guessing, the genius of cross-examination, and no scruple or delicacy in exercising their gifts. They are dauntless in their investigations. They will stand hours behind a curtain watching, through an opera-glass, the doings of their opposite neighbour; they find means of ascertaining whether such a silk dress be dyed or new. The incomes, the habits, the secret aspirations, and castle building of the town are discovered by those lynx-eyed individuals—its incipient engagements are nipped in the bud. Yet the keen tattler is not always intentionally malicious. She is clever, curious, irreverent, and amusing in talk. In her lie the latent untrained faculties that might make a novelist, a detective, a cross-examiner of a witness in a court of justice. Nor must we forget the serious tattler, the priestess of platitude and common-place, the guardian of the ark of the covenant with dulness and conventionalism. The serious tattler allows no excuse for straying from ordinary paths. She will admit no explanation of doubtful appearances. Her most indulgent sentence is a lofty dismissal, referring the mystery to that last day when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed; and as she says this, an anticipation of the huge dish of scandal that awaits the elect brightens her solemn countenance. Still these tattlers may differ from that malicious creature who is found everywhere, who spreads reports light as air with an object, who drops the word which she knows will act as an irritant;—and that out of simple jealousy of every happiness, out of spite in the abstract. But the more dangerous class of gossips is distinct from the ordinary retailer of small talk, and must have a chapter to itself. A characteristic of the provincial mind is its instinctive persuasion that in love affairs the advances come from the

woman ; this may be owing to the fact that eligible men, obeying the call of centralization, drift towards the large cities and are at a premium in smaller towns. From whatever cause, the conviction is there ; it inspires the chorus in which idle and mischievous tattlers join alike, and the burden of which might be summed up thus : " Defenceless is man against the designs of the wily woman : the modest one is left to fade unmated ; but the impudent one wins his weak heart." Lives that might have been joined are sundered by this unmeaning tattle that drives nails into the coffin of a murdered joy.

We have left to the last the vials of gossip that are let loose upon a town, when a religious controversy seizes it. It is the young we pity, when, attempting to set their faces towards the Heavenly City, they are placed in the censorious and hampering atmosphere of tattle. In every life there comes a moment when the call seems to be made to journey towards wider aspirations and worthier ambitions. Christiana, still lingering in the city of Destruction, heard the call to become a pilgrim. It is a profound truth, in the old allegory, that her first proof of courage was in shutting her ears to the tattle of her neighbours, Mrs. Timorous, Mrs. Inconsiderate, Mrs. Blind-Bat, Mrs. Light-Mind, and Mrs. Know-Nothing.

ALICE CORKRAN.

Reviews and Views.

ALTHOUGH London has been disappointed of the pleasure —promised by rumour—of hearing Professor Ruskin's Oxford Slade Lectures re-delivered in its midst, amends were made to the fortunate few who heard the lecture on "Francesca's Book," at the house of Mr. and Mrs. Bishop, in Prince of Wales Terrace, Kensington. The first part of the address was concerned with children's books, with children in art, and with the thousand thoughts which vibrate in Mr. Ruskin's mind when any single thought speaks. There was a wilful and exquisitely humorous inconsequence—far better than any one else's cohesion and pertinence—in the lecturer's denunciation of all things which do not come into the scope of Miss Kate Greenaway's little landscape backgrounds. That Colman's mustard is not advertised on her fences, that her little brooks are not spanned by iron railway bridges, that there is no tunnel gaping in her hills—these facts, which may be predicated of the majority of designers, even of those who do not share Miss Greenaway's delightful genius—were made by the speaker into an irresistible reason for consigning all machinery, newspapers, engines, and advertisements to a pit of condemnation. And then Mr. Ruskin came to one of those moments of his lecture in which he told his truths with solemnity rather than gaiety. All divine strength, he said, is human strength; though you may make machines to drive a train through a mountain, or to lift a ship bodily out of the sea, none of these forces will be nobler than the force of a man's arm and a man's blow. There is no divine physical effort beyond the effort of Heracles. And Mr. Ruskin uttered the wish which he has expressed before, and which will bear hearing again and again—that men

would learn that what they can dig out of the earth is not worth what grows upon it; and that peace is to be found where God leads us—"among the green pastures and beside the waters of comfort."

In his praise of the progress made in the art of colour-printing—an art to which the world owes the reproduction of Miss Greenaway's drawings, and which probably uses for its perfection some kind of machinery—Mr. Ruskin showed how still the mechanical process fell short of the tenderness and life of the drawing. For instance, a charming design of a child under an apple-tree stood side by side with the printed reproduction, and the lecturer showed his audience how the apple-blossom is loose in the drawing, and on the point of dropping to the grass, and how in the print it is fast "and will never come to apples." It was by such delicious fancies as this—a fancy akin to that of Keats, when he imagines a little town "by river or sea-shore, or mountain-built with peaceful citadel," standing empty of its folk for ever, because they are away at their procession on the "Grecian urn"—that Mr. Ruskin reached the most delicate and intimate recesses of his hearers' artistic feeling. To their highest enthusiasm he appealed by his homage to the "Child and the Woman" who inspired Christian art, and whose pure and tender images had almost saved the world from the wreck and ruin wrought by the Renaissance. It is difficult to express the satisfaction which we feel in hearing the Renaissance abused *carrément*. But when Professor Ruskin passed to the children of literature, and said touching and memorable things of Dickens's doubtful inspirations, the hearer was sensible of an omission, one which will never be remedied if the lecturer persevere in his resolution not to read George Eliot. He spoke with full faith of little Nell, a child whom the present generation probably finds hard to believe in as a

work of true art; but there was no word of the sincere and serious genius, the deep wisdom, the sensitive sympathy, which created Maggie Tulliver, Totty, and Eppie, Lillo, and last, not least, the Oriental-cockney children, Jacob with his "small patriarchal countenance," and Adelaide Rebekah.

"Francesca's Book" itself proved to be—not the book read together by the unhappy lovers of Rimini—but a volume in manuscript, illustrated by the pen-and-ink drawings of the author, Miss Frances Alexander, an American lady who has devoted many years to studying the poetic legends, *stornelli*, and *rispetti* of Tuscan peasants among the less tourist-trodden hills of that gentle province, to noting down and translating the improvisations of the poets who declaim their unpremeditated verses in *ottava rima* and *terza rima* at the festivals or *giostri* of the district, and to drawing the beautiful and noble types of that matchless peasantry in her illustrations to their own songs. Mr. Ruskin allowed his hearers to see the drawings, which show more lofty and delicate feeling and loving workmanship in details than science or power of draughtsmanship or construction. They and the writings which accompany them, not having been reproduced by type or graver, are as unique as missals done by monks of Durham or Croyland in the Merry England of long ago. Mr. Ruskin has bought this treasure—so greatly after his own heart—for his museum at Sheffield.

First in the book comes the portrait of the old peasant woman, Beatrice, honoured among her native vineyards as the noblest improviser of her time, upon whom the gift of poetry and song fell on her wedding morning and at her wedding feast, and who sang the creation of the world, and the glory of God, and the life and death of the Saviour, like that Cædmon

upon whom the inspiration came as he sat alone among the cattle in his barn, having left the supper because he knew not how to sing. Next Miss Alexander gives us a series of drawings illustrating the legend of St. Christopher, as sung by the Tuscans ; then a drawing for another song, which recites how the Holy Family rested in Egypt in the house of a gipsy, who asked leave to tell the Holy Child's fortune ; next a design of the Lord and the Woman of Samaria, in which the face of Christ is singularly beautiful ; then the portrait of a most noble young peasant who gains her bread by clearing the Government roads of snow on the summits of the mountains—her clear and tender face seems made for the arts and gaieties of the gentlest life. Another beautiful design illustrates one of the *rispetti* of the people, a song of salutation sung by a peasant lad to the girl he loves as she passes his window modestly upon her way to Mass ; here, too, the faces, the figures, the simple and noble gait, are drawn from life. Finally, Mr. Ruskin showed his auditors a scene from the life of St. Zita, an obscure saint who won all her saintship on the hard work and hard fare of a farm-servant, and whose name, as we know, is popular among the servant class throughout North Italy as that of a patroness of the condition of service. Only one miracle, Mr. Ruskin tells us, is recorded of St. Zita—how drawing water from a well one day in the course of her labours, she was accosted by a poor traveller, who asked her for water. Wishing that she had something better wherewith to refresh his weariness, she let her bucket down ; but that which she gave him to drink had become pure wine. Miss Alexander chose for her model of the holy saint a girl who was herself a farm-servant ; and indeed throughout these designs appropriateness of character has been studied. At the end of his explanation of them Mr. Ruskin gave thanks to Heaven for being permitted to see art so beautiful so nobly applied. But in giving these brief notes upon his address, in order to convey something of its

spirit we should need to borrow his own genius, the human thoughtfulness, the gaiety, the frolic and the fire of the most fascinating speaker of English of his time.

Our own experiences of the Tuscans bear out Mr. Ruskin's horror of large towns. In precise measure as we near the city—even the gentle city of Florence—do we find a certain corruption growing in the songs. These cease to be rhapsodies on the "creation of the world," until, as we reach the gates, we meet thoughtless young citizens who troll such ditties as *Perdita* forbade. Happily the influence of town evil is not wide. As the green wheat ripples to within a stone's throw of the old brown walls, so does the sane peasant-life endure unsullied even within sight of Brunelleschi's dome, and of Giotto's tower, and within hearing of its contralto bells. On the slopes of the immemorial hill of Fiesole are homes of rustic politeness, where we have heard a young daughter of the farm read Tasso aloud by lantern light, while her brothers packed the figs for the morrow's market, and where the members of familiar and nearly-connected households never meet for the day's work without courteous salutations, inquiries as to the night's rest, gay greetings, which in the sweet Tuscan language have morning by summer morning floated in at our open window with their gentle awakening.

The month of June was made memorable by another event, the performance of the "Tale of Troy" at Sir Charles Freake's house at South Kensington. More or less sketchy comments appeared in the Press at the time, but some permanent record should be made of an undertaking which presented to London what was probably the loveliest sight it has looked on since the world began to grow ugly—say some three hundred

years ago. Never artists worked with finer materials to a more beautiful result than did Sir Frederick Leighton and Mr. Poynter, Mr. Watts, Mr. George Simonds and Professsr Delamotte, when they grouped living figures into perfect compositions, clothed them with exquisite colour, and set them against backgrounds of absolute artistic beauty—not merely of that relative beauty, or mitigation of offence, with which we are bound to be content in the theatre. There was nothing of the stage in the “Tale of Troy,” none of its always inevitable self-consciousness, indirectness, and triviality ; but in the place of these we found a perfectly poetic unconsciousness, a singleness and simplicity, and a directness and sincerity of action which most fitly expressed the “elementary passions” of the youth of the world. Aptly has Tennyson said that “things seen are mightier than things heard.” They are certainly mightier than things read ; and probably there was no Homeric student present who did not feel for the first time admitted into that most beautiful and long dead world, initiated into ways of thought and attitudes of mind which mankind has not only abandoned but forgotten, into pieties and duties and a “criticism of life” which are “as dead as Hector.” For the first time he saw, with more convincing eyes than those of the imagination, into the seriousness, the sadness, the cruelty, the dignity, the all-pervading grace of that Homeric age ; and callous must have been the heart that did not feel the poignant pathos of all those beautiful human beings, dead three thousand years.

The ladies engaged in the “Tale of Troy” did surprisingly and immeasurably better than the men. In reality of expression, “in all grace of movement, and the charm of married brows,” Mrs. Beerbohm Tree’s “Andromache” was beyond praise, and her power in the awful and lovely scene of the “Mourning for Hector” was truly and primitively tragic and touching. Miss

Ethel Coxon in "Cassandra," and Miss Gertrude Kohnstamm and Miss Jane Harrison in "Penelope," were equal in a nobility of gesture such as the stage seldom shows us, and all the minor parts were filled with artistic discipline and care. We must only except a slight triviality in the "Nausicaa" of a graceful lady who had hardly studied the Homeric reticence and dignity and the exquisite negatives of the character. Negatives are proverbially difficult to prove, and so are they to paint and to describe, and so are they to act ; but they make up half of a lady's manners. How tender Homer is of Nausicaa's dignity, in spite of her unsought interest in Ulysses ! How he spares her stateliness, and saves her sweet susceptibility from humiliation ! The actress had hardly understood his sensitiveness.

Of the *tableaux*, as distinct from the acted scenes, perhaps the noblest was Mr. Poynter's "Retribution of Ulysses," in which the colouring and lighting were especially fine, the composition simple, and the action energetic. "The Pledge of Aphrodite Redeemed," which showed Helen unveiling her face with an exquisite action of reluctance and foreboding to the gaze of Paris, while Peitho, the Goddess of Persuasion, bending in a lovely pose, whispered in her ear, was too populous for a scene of secret counsel. Aphrodite, who presided, and Eros, whose glittering wings fluttered in the background, might have been better away, in spite of the singular elegance with which the lines of the several figures were composed. The painting of the background of the windy plains of Troy, as seen from the walls whence the slender, white-robed Helen looked out upon the Grecian camp, was grand in colour, light and line. As for the dresses, they tended to make the spectator ill-content with the ignoble, vulgarly attractive, sometimes indecorous, and always undignified dress of our own times. The tissues, so subtle that they crumpled like poppy-petals, modestly in-

dicated the form without insistence or coarse emphasis, and allowed freedom to the rhythmic movement of that human body which God honours. Women of several ages, of different degrees of beauty, and of various stature, the actresses of the "Tale of Troy" all looked of noble nature. It was little less than painful to come out upon the poor pretensions of contemporary London.

From the multitude of verses graciously offered to us for publication, the following claim acceptance, in spite of a defective rhyme, if only because they contain that precious thing—a fancy:—

ON FINDING A BIRD'S NEST.

Whither away,
Bright denizen of air? Why need'st thou fly?—
As though 'twere fatal, should I come to know
Thy tiny mystery: a wisp of hair,
Dry leaves, and hay,
And six white globules, brown-specked here and there,
Arranged thus orderly. Thou wouldst not go,
Didst thou divine what link of sympathy
Binds thee and me.

I have my mysteries too—my little wiles,
My hopes, my fears, my happiness and harm,
That fellow-mortals know not. And an eye
Observes me also. Wheresoe'er I fly,
There it pursues me, penetrating, calm;
And sometimes, pitying too, perchance it smiles,
As I on thee.

H. L. P.

Spring herself was so late this year that she must not complain if her poets are tardy and their verses in her honour printed out of due time, especially when those verses have to

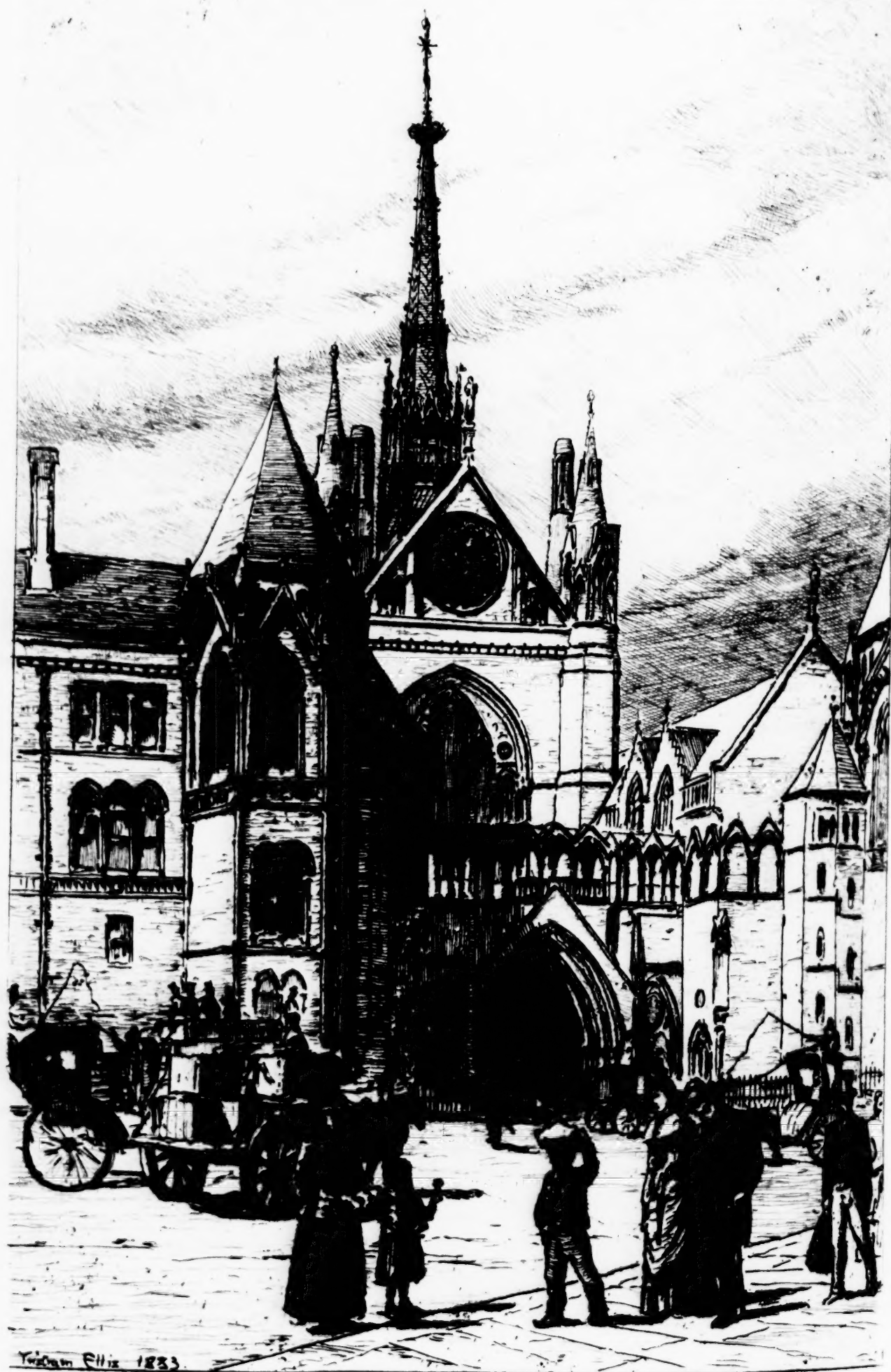
travel from the south of Europe. It is thence that we have received the following poem which, notwithstanding some little faults of structure, deserves recognition as an example of poetic feeling and expression :—

A SPRING FRAGMENT.

Your festival it is we hold to-day—
Green leaves, gay flowers, white butterflies,
Clear-singing birds ! each living thing that plies
Through the wide gates of Spring its forward way
In quest of some ineffable emprise,
Intoxicate with life, intoxicate with May,
Free from December's clasp, warm for the arms of June.

Oh, ye that speak in colour, think in tune,
Your festa shall be ours ! We too smite down
Winter's fell hand and crush his icy crown ;
We, writhing, wrestling, wrench our souls amain
From the steel-mailed, fatal grasp of pain.
Rent are grief's twilight robes ; with heart and hand,
Tense on life's utmost chord, we, white-clad, stand
Straight for the golden gates of summer-land !

H. F. A.



PRINCIPAL ENTRANCE TO THE NEW LAW COURTS.